

# INSURRECTION



ISSUE ONE / 50 PENCE



INSURRECTION", A NEW ANARCHIST PAPER. IT WILL CONTAIN THEORETICAL ARTICLES, ARTICLES ON CURRENT EVENTS, A CHRONICLE OF STRUGGLE, AND WILL DENOUNCE REPRESSION IN ALL ITS FORMS. NOTHING UNUSUAL SO FAR. NEW ANARCHIST PAPERS APPEAR FREQUENTLY, FULL OF HOPES, BUT DIE AFTER A FEW ISSUES QUITE DIVORCED FROM REALITY.

"INSURRECTION" IS BORN WITH NO GREAT HOPES. WE ARE NOT HOPING

THE PAPER WILL SELL A GIVEN NUMBER OF COPIES EACH MONTH JUST SO THAT IT CAN KEEP COMING OUT. WE DON'T WANT COMRADES TO DUTIFULLY SEND US FIFTY PENCE A MONTH TO PUT THEIR CONSCIENCE AT REST, DELUDING THEMSELVES THAT THEY ARE THUS DOING SOMETHING 'FOR THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION'.

IF AFTER A FEW ISSUES WE REALISE THIS IS HOW PEOPLE REACT TO "INSURRECTION" WE SHALL STOP PRODUCING IT. THERE ARE ALREADY TOO MANY ANARCHIST PAPERS ENDLESSLY REPEATING THEMSELVES IN DEFENCE OF A BANNER OR SYMBOL AND OFFERING NO REAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRUGGLE.

"INSURRECTION" INTENDS TO BE AN INSTRUMENT, NOT JUST ANOTHER PIECE IN A NEVER COMPLETED JIGSAW PUZZLE. BUT WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE, A HANDFUL OF COMRADES. TO BE A REAL INSTRUMENT AN ANARCHIST PAPER MUST PROVIDE NOT ONLY 'INFORMATION' BUT ALSO 'INDICATIONS'. THE DAILY PRESS IS FULL OF INFORMATION OF A CERTAIN KIND, BUT ONLY ONE INDICATION—KEEP QUIET AND DO NOTHING—THUS GIVING THE STATE THE CONSENSUS IT REQUIRES.

AN ANARCHIST PAPER SHOULD GIVE BOTH THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL INDICATIONS OF STRUGGLE. THERE IS NO ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO. THEY OFTEN MERGE, THEORY BECOMING THE INDISPENSABLE PREMISS OF ACTION, ACTION BECOMING THEORETICAL ANALYSIS.

AN EXAMPLE—A WILDCAT STRIKE, A MASS SACKING, A FACTORY OCCUPATION, A RIOT, A STRUGGLE IN ONE OF THE GHETTOS OR IN A SCHOOL. IN SUCH SITUATIONS COMRADES OFTEN DON'T KNOW HOW TO INTERVENE WITH IMMEDIATE AND EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA. THEY COULD CONTACT THE PAPER'S EDITORIAL GROUP AND TOGETHER PUBLISH AN ARTICLE. BY DISTRIBUTING COPIES ON THE SPOT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO BEGIN OR DEEPEN THE CONTACT WITH THE STRUGGLE ITSELF.

IF THIS METHOD IS USED IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS THE



PAPER WILL BECOME AN INSTRUMENT, NOT JUST A LITERARY EXERCISE FOR A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE. THE NATURE OF THIS WORK WILL NOT EMERGE CLEARLY FROM THE FIRST ISSUE, BUT COMRADES SHOULD BEAR IT IN MIND BOTH IN THEIR COLLABORATION WITH THE PAPER AND IN THE USE OF THE COPIES THEY REQUEST

# ISSUE ONE

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# THE LOGIC OF

# INSURRECTION

When we hear the word insurrection we think of some precise moment of upheaval in the past, or imagine a similar clash in the future. Spontaneous insurrection occurs when people are pushed beyond their limits of endurance at their points of exploitation. Certain events take place: street clashes, attacks against the police, destruction of the symbols of capitalism (banks, jewellers, supermarkets, etc.). Such moments of popular violence catch anarchists unprepared, amazed that yesterday's apathy is transformed into today's rage.

Look at Brixton a couple of years ago: anarchists were not, could not have been, protagonists in the riot. Events took them by surprise. People rose up for reasons apparently simple, but which were hatching beneath the surface for a long time. Anarchists' participation was simply that of adapting to the situation, the *guests* of an insurrection but not acting with an insurrectional logic. To throw a brick is not the best way for a conscious revolutionary to participate in an insurrection.

When we talk of applying a logic of insurrection we mean going about things the other way round. We do not limit ourselves to identifying areas of social tension and joining in when it explodes, we try to stimulate rebellion and even more, propose and participate in the formation of an organisation of revolt.

Let's try to be as clear as possible. The kind of organisation we mean should be of an associative, social or mass character—a committee, support group, league against repression, association for housing rights, anti-nuclear groups, abstentionist league against the elections, etc—not a specific anarchist group. Why should people have to belong to an anarchist group to take part in a social struggle?

People's participation in this kind of structure can be limitless, depending on the work the anarchists manage to do within it. Beginning with a handful of comrades and people most motivated in a particular struggle, whether it be a wildcat strike, mass sackings, a proposed NATO base, squatting, etc., it would entail initially spreading information about the situation set out as clearly as possible. Leaflets, journals, posters, debates, conferences, public meetings and so on would be used and the embryo of one of the groups mentioned above formed. When there is some response to this part of the work it is time to establish a meeting place and contact number. The organisation's actions will become more effective as the struggle progresses, numbers increase and repression develops against it.

The outcome will not be certain. The active presence of anarchists does not mean control but rather stimulation. They have the same rights as the others and no particular weight in decision making. Their suggestions will be considered valid if they are both in tune with the general level of feeling and at the same time try to push it forward. Timid or hesitant proposals would be rejected as obstacles to advancing the struggle and as betraying their needs and rebellion.

A proposal that is too far advanced, that goes beyond the level of the moment would be considered impossible, dangerous and counterproductive. People would withdraw, afraid of being mixed up in who knows what.

Anarchists operating within this structure must therefore be in touch with reality and propose actions that are both possible and comprehensible. It is possible that a spreading mass rebellion could evolve from this initial work of stimulation. This is what we mean by the methods and logic of insurrection. It is quite different to the logic of trade unionism and syndicalism (including anarcho-syndicalism), structures which all begin from a logic of defence as opposed to one of attack. They tend towards quantitative growth (increasing membership) and defending past gains, and, in the case of the trade unions, protecting the interests of one category. What we are proposing on the contrary are basic associative structures organised to deal with one objective of struggle and stimulate people's feelings of rebellion, to culminate in as conscious an insurrection as possible.

Using this method there is no way the anarchists within the structure can transform themselves into a leadership or power group. In fact, as we have said, they are obliged to follow the conditions of the struggle. They are not working for a quantitative growth in their own anarchist group. They cannot propose simply defensive actions but are constrained to go towards increasingly advanced ones. On the one hand these actions can lead to insurrection and levels that cannot be predicted. On the other they can fail to be effective. In either case the original associative structure inevitably becomes redundant, and the anarchists will go back to what they were doing before.

Alfredo M. Bonanno



## THE DEVIL'S PLANS

English capitalism is among the most advanced in the world both at a technological level and at that of the production of social peace.

The conservatives' coming to power fitted into this situation perfectly. In a sense what the progressivism of the labour party 'party of the people' was able to give English capitalism through its socialist rhetoric—welfare, incomes policy (i.e. wage cuts) and the dismembering of the hardest and most advanced struggles—had all been done. They could go no further on the road of permissiveness and State supporter of demand.

An about turn has now taken place. Privatisation is allowing capital to regain whole sectors of productivity that had been taken from it by State initiatives (nationalisation). In this way the government's process of creating social peace does not come about directly (through social security benefits for example), but indirectly (through reduction of inflation, increased possibility of work, selected demand, accentuation of social differences,

enclosure of the poverty ghettos, repression of these ghettos, etc.).

Economic reality had threatened to become divided into two unequal parts: a small productive minority and a huge unproductive majority who however were still active consumers.

What they now want is a stratification into three fairly equal levels: a high-earning productive one, a low earning productive one with a qualified, contained demand; and one with no earnings and fierce repression against it (see increases in government spending on police, prisons, etc.).

Social filters will be greatly restricted, something that is still easy to bring about in the largely 'closed' structure which still persists in this country today.

Incentive comes from capital returning to find new areas of investment in the homeland instead of going looking for them abroad, for example in America where the dollar rate is so attractive...In this way the dollar/pound relationship should move in favour of the pound, allowing Mrs Thatcher a better political

management of private investment and her schemes for privatisation.

But the second and third categories mentioned above—Will they passively accept being put in their place? Will they accept having to reduce their demand and have it selected according to the will of those commanding them? And those who have been pushed into the ghettos, will they agree to remain there? Will they accept living with soldiers controlling every street corner?

All this remains to be seen.

With Mr Kinnoch, Labour have put into operation a kind of 'conversion to centre', leaving Mr Foot with his impracticable trade unionist fantasies out in the cold.

But isn't there still the road of uncontrollable wildcat strikes? And that of sabotage? That of self-managed organisation of the struggle? The future is wide open to discussion. The devil's plans go oft astray.

Pantagruel



# STOP THE CITY? POLITICS IN WOLVES' CLOTHING

Comrades of *Greenpeace* and various anarchist and pacifist groups and individuals organised a demonstration which took place on September 29 under the slogan *Stop the City*. The object was to demonstrate the link between the city and the battlefields, between big business and Cruise. By paralysing the working of this seemingly aseptic centre of accounting and financial transactions, office workers and bank clerks were to become aware of the homicidal implications of their daily routines. The denunciation of a situation of fact: that the whole nuclear programme has solid roots in the capitalist strongholds of the world and that this is the real force behind all the State facades of 'defence' and other such double speak. The demonstration took various forms. Some comrades organised sit-ins, others road blocks, others again went for direct attacks on vehicles and buildings. Leaflets were distributed and banks were suddenly filled with demonstrators blocking tills. The demonstration was the result of months of preparation. Comrades came from all over the country. Here are some impressions of the event:

203 people arrested without a struggle or anyone fighting back...as if people wanted to be arrested so they could tell their kids...we didn't work imaginatively together but bunched up like a crowd of silly sheep...it should be clear by now (after 900 got done at Upper Heyford) that it's futile to court arrest and hope for good publicity in the fascist press...several groups let off smoke canisters in the Tube tunnels during the morning, the northern and circle lines were closed for some time...several trains were stopped by people pulling the emergency cords...some prepared nails welded together so that a pointed end always sticks up. They scattered these on the roads at key points...a fur shop was successfully smashed up by the animal activists during the demo...trading was badly hit at London International Futures exchange when *Stop the City* people used it as a main gathering point. No despatch riders were able to reach it due to the crowd and vital bank drafts and telexes went astray...one red-necked bastard police inspector got a good kicking after he pushed a punk woman in the face...another group got right inside Rothschilds pretending to be couriers before being set upon by a gang of nasties...for me *Stop the City* was a brilliant success. What I saw was the birth of a new movement without leaders or bureaucracy. At last we have gone beyond the sterile passivity of the institutionalised Peace Movement...*Stop the City* had room for diversity...let's do it again, let's do it every six months or even quarterly!...sitting outside the Bank tube station were three fascist skinheads openly displaying their fucking swastikas tattooed on their arms, shouting abuse and racist slogans at the poxy peace protests, knowing that with a large amount of police present no one would stand up to these SHITheads and try to stop these crap...*Stop the City* was SHIT...

As we can see, consideration of the event are as mixed as the event itself. One thing however was confirmed that day: that many comrades are ready to come out into the streets and defy the 'order' of police lines, military formations and legal threats with an energy and creativity which if released with more

preparation and direction is of a quality that far outweighs the counterpart's numerical superiority.

For this reason we feel the need to look more closely at certain analytical premises of *Stop the City*.

The first is that the argument—that of nuclear arms and City dealings—was placed in *political* terms. In other words, there was no intention of attracting a mass involvement which could have led to a generalised attack.

So far nothing unusual here. Political demonstrations are the most common kind and anarchists are often present without contradicting their revolutionary aims. What does become contradictory is the frustration that some comrades obviously felt about the 'tame' methods used to put this political message across. Yet, looking at the situation objectively—the transmission of certain information to predominantly office and white collar workers, and only in second place to other strata of workers (totally relying on media coverage for this)—it had no need for a head on collision with the police to prove its point. It could even be argued that the point could be more effectively put across using the traditional pacifist methods as the demonstration had been planned in terms of pacifist politics even though many comrades had wanted—and attempted—to use direct action and attack to convey them.

To be more explicit: the basic message of *Stop the City* (linking armaments to City financial dealings) does not go beyond the limits of the CND type organisation's political stand of publicising and attacking the nuclear race as a *thing in itself*, without inserting it into a social context and linking it to everyday exploitation. That is why we see very few manual workers and unemployed on anti-nuclear demonstrations but predominantly middle class school teachers, social workers, etc. It is not because the demo decides to use 'hard' tactics instead of 'soft' that this situation will change.

What miner, his lungs filling up with black dust that is slowly killing him (and he knows it), the lorry driver who has to face all weather conditions to take home a weekly wage, the millions in the sweatshops trying to keep body and soul together, have any interest in vague and general beatings about PEACE? Even

a 'hard' demonstration based on that premise seems far removed from their reality. On the face of it these people, and the millions of unemployed manual workers and young people don't care about the eventuality of a nuclear war. At least it would be quicker than the slow painful deaths and the casualty lists of a war that is being waged against them every day. Yet without their involvement anti-war demonstrations will be nothing more than a political protest albeit with a fringe available for direct action as their preferred method.

If anarchists mean to not only inform about but also attack the armaments programme, the militarisation of our territory and so on, we must prepare far wider and incisive strategies than another *Stop the City* demonstration, or even monthly ones as has been suggested!

Even the (symbolic) attack on the 'heart of the State' is a political gesture. Anarchists are well aware that the State has no heart, is just as vulnerable at the dole office, the housing estates, transport networks, etc, etc, as it is in the City. It will never be known what might have happened in Italy in the last few years had groups such as the stalinist Red

Brigades instead of 'striking the heart of the State' had worked to widen socialise their attacks at a level that could be comprehended and participated in by workers instead of taking on a military frontal attack which forced them into isolation and becoming part of the spectacle to be dished up daily by the media with the effect of crippling autonomous struggle and now ended up in the squalor of betrayal, repentance and amnesty.

This all leads to a series of questions which have never been discussed within the movement and which in my opinion are fundamentally linked to any proposals of action. The distinction between strategy and tactics (in the case of *Stop the City* tactics came under fire while the basic strategy was never questioned) needs to be gone into. The (in many cases false) problem of the distinction between pacifist and violent methods in anti-nuclear struggles is open to discussion. It's time to stop burying our heads in the sand or bristling up every time the concept of criticism and self-criticism appears, concepts which are fundamental to anarchism itself and without which we risk becoming robotic activists.

Jean Vitor



# CHRONICLE

## SEPTEMBER

**1** British Gas Corporation is to cut between 10,000 and 20,000 jobs by the end of the 80's.

Police are investigating bombings at the London offices and home of South African millionaire Sir Philip Oppenheimer.

**5** The day before term starts a Berkshire primary school is set alight and destroyed.

1984 showed a record fall of 500,000 in TUC memberships.

**6** Scotland Yard launches 'neighbourhood watch' scheme. Meetings are being held with residents' associations, pensioners and children, inviting them all to spy on each other.

Unemployed 16 year old Andrew Bardin from Rotherhithe 'dies' after being chased by an Australian tourist who saw him stealing a handbag. How this 'citizen's arrest' came about is not made public. What we know is that Andrew ended up choking on his own vomit.

75% abstention in the Lewisham Drakes Ward by-election.

Dunstan Dunstan, 29, is committed for trial at Aylesbury Crown Court, accused of threatening to kill Prince Charles.



**8** A letter bomb addressed to Secretary of State Norman Tebbit ignites on being opened by a clerk. In Edinburgh another was sent to George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland.

12 year old Craig Bennett was killed while working at a funfair ride belonging to Mr Maurice Sketchley, Abergale, N. Wales who employed him from 11 am till 10 30 pm for £5. His T shirt caught on a catch and pulled him backwards into the ride as it span round.

**12** A 30 year old coach driver is thrown through the windscreen in an accident and crushed to death.

**13** 62 year old William Kemp was hit by a crane and killed while working for Freight Masters Services Ltd, Ferry Lane, Rainham.

100 dossers are to be 'evicted' from Embankment Tube station arches.

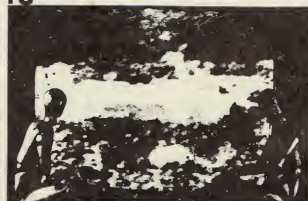
**15** There is to be an enquiry into the death of 17 year old David Brookes who fell down a dis-used mineshaft while doing a YTS course.

**17** Shadow Wignall, accused of throwing 2 gallons of petrol over desks and floor of Brixton Employment Centre and setting them alight refuses to recognise the court during his three-day trial, remaining in the police cells below. He is sentenced to four years.

80 Animal Action demonstrators arrested.

Derailment of underground train at Gedling Colliery injures 31 Nottingham miners.

**18** Official YOP toll is 17 deaths and 3000 injuries during its first three years.



A worker is killed in BP chemical plant explosion in Hull.

**19** At Brixton prison prisoners rebel against warders' policy of removing ring pulls from drinks cans. 15 screws end up in hospital.

**22** 13,000 miners strike spontaneously in solidarity with workmate suspended for allegedly hitting out at foreman.

**24** Home Secretary Leon Brittan announces allocation of 600 extra places for 'disruptive prisoners'. Frankland Prison near Durham is to be allocated to 'top security' prisoners.

Angry miners jostle union bosses as wildcat strikes spread across Yorkshire coalfields.

DPP clears police of blame in connection with death of James Davey in a Coventry police station.

1,000 jobs are to go at the Dunlop car tyre plant in Birmingham.

In Cardiff Court another conspiracy farce is acted out. Anarchist comrade Daffyd Ladd is among the accused.

DHSS employees call for increased protection following wave of firebombings of offices in response to recent stepping up of DHSS snooping on claimants.

**25** At the last count Her Majesty was playing hostess to 43,415 prisoners in her stinking jails.

Mass breakout from Maze concentration camp. 21 escape.

**28** 38 year old farm worker John Bancroft of Harston loses his right arm in a potato harvesting machine.

22 year old soldier and Hitler fanatic who had tried to form Nazi movement in the Falls Road is sentenced to life after being found guilty of shooting three of 'his men' - one aged 20, the others 19. They had spoken in Hebrew while on checkpoint duty in the Lebanon.

A warden in Perth maximum security is released by a prisoner who had been holding him at knifepoint for 22 hours.

## OCTOBER

**1** 28,000 people in London hold shotgun licences. There were 12,000 robberies in the city last year, 1,800 with guns.

Secretary of State for Social Services Norman Fowler announces that almost 5,000 jobs will go as government health cuts are agreed upon.

**4** Lewes Crown Court offices are broken into and lockers opened. Walls were sprayed with encircled A's and 'Lewes Rebel Army'.

Young girls in State 'care' are kept drugged and locked in isolation cells it is disclosed.

A normal working day - until the lorry skids off an M6 sliproad and falls 30 feet on to another. One driver is killed outright. The other is

seriously ill in hospital.

Attack on Lambeth Conservative Club. Paint and bricks are thrown and slogans graffitied (see document).

**7** Paul Raymond's Whitehall theatre 'Theatre of War' is cleared when two incendiary devices are discovered on the premises.

**8** Thames Valley police are to recruit another 100 officers.

Health and Safety officer reports 8 000 serious accidents among farm labourers in a year.

**11** A 2 ft iron bar is thrust into the underground chain driving the assembly line at the Austin Rover Cowley works halting production for 90 minutes and causing a loss of 50 Maestro cars.

Trial begins of two Kent brothers accused of sending a number of letter bombs to 'top people' including Mrs Thatcher and Prince Charles.

Because of increasingly frequent riots in 'top security' prisons a Home Office committee under Mr Anthony Langdon is to study new ways of controlling prisoners. Screws are calling for re-installation of control units for long term prisoners foreseen by Leon Brittan's announcement of 20 years' minimum imprisonment for killings during armed robberies of police and security guards, etc.

**13** Manpower Services Commission are considering recruiting 'young offenders' and children leaving special homes (eg Dr Barnardos) to fill some of the 20% places in the YOP which school leavers have refused to be conned into.

Treasury breakdown of price rises over the past twenty years shows that essentials like fuel, rates and water charges are those that have risen most. The poor continue to be those hit hardest.

**14** Statistics supplied to an Age Concern conference show that in the winter of 1981 3/4 people on average died each day from cold (ie poverty). Official no of deaths from 'hypothermia' for that year are 646.



Mounting tension in Brittan's prisons forces Home Office to announce plans to reduce prison population by 4,300 in an attempt to defuse it.

A 58 year old worker is crushed to death at Ford Dagenham plant as he helped shift a 2 1/2 ton die used to stamp out car body panels.

**17** The Home Office, backed by magistrates and parliamentary penal affairs group are preparing a report on 'part time' prison - eg Saturday am till Sunday night for working offenders and 9 am till 9 pm weekdays for the unemployed. These 'part time prisoners' would be taken to special camps manned (they intend) by retired screws and schoolteachers.

A London professor of kidney diseases is refusing to sign death certificates of patients who have died because of lack of treatment due to government cuts (2,500 out of every 4,000 he estimates) and is instead referring such cases to coroner.

**19** Explosive situation at Gartree 'model' prison. Warders are demanding eight extra of their kind and say that in the case of riots they'll abandon compound and flee to the perimeter,



# CHRONICLE

'Supergrass' arrested in West Belfast after retracting evidence at a press conference which has caused the imprisonment of 28 people. More than 300 people are being held in N. Ireland on evidence of 20 'supergrasses'. Some are still waiting after 20 months inside for trial.

**21** Due to privatisation many cleaners—among the lowest paid workers in the country—are to have wage cuts from £2.12 to £1.80 in the London area and ICC in Merseyside are going to reduce their hourly rate from £1.70 to £1.50.

**26** Fire sweeps through an East End sweat shop—DK Netawere Manufacturing of Mile End Road—killing four young seamstresses.

**27** Another victim of work. This time a man is killed while working in a sewer.

**28** Mother of David Moore (he was killed by a speeding police car during Toxteth riots) gets damages awarded.

**29** 187 women, many carrying wire cutters, are arrested when they breach the fence at Greenham Common missile base.

**30** One worker is killed and another two are seriously injured in a Dundee shipyard.

Another 16 women arrested at Greenham.

## NOVEMBER

**1** On Thursday terrified children were evicted by the SPG from a council home, the Hollies, in Sidcup, Kent. The kids had barricaded themselves in after being told they were to be moved to other homes. Twenty were taken to Bexleyheath police station, another thirteen ran away. Since then the home has been smashed up and the warden's house burned out.

Closure of Scott Lithgow shipyard in Clydebank announced. 4,500 jobs will go resulting in the paralysis of the whole area.

Six miners are trapped and their rescuers also risk death more than three hundred feet underground after a roof collapses in a 72 year old pit in Doncaster due to be closed in 1985.



BNFL nuclear waste dischargers have discharged a quarter of a ton of plutonium in the last 20 years, enough to give 250 million people a lethal dose if dispersed through the atmosphere. British Nuclear Fuels have identified a town in Cumbria about 30 miles from the coastline where a 'cancer cluster' exists, but refuse to disclose the name of the town.

**2** War secretary Michael Heseltine announces in the House of Commons that peace protesters will be shot by the guards of the Cruise missiles if it is considered that they are a threat to their genocidal projects.

**5** A deserter is handed back to the army after 23 years. Fusilier Eamonn Gilligan, 46, was remanded at Prestatyn, N Wales to await military escort. He deserted while on leave from Africa.

A man rammed his car through the security cordon into the Greenham Common missile base yesterday. The speeding car headed straight for the giant American Galaxy aircraft unloading

equipment for the missiles but was rammed by US military police before it reached its target.

Fireworks cause £200 damage when thrown into a sex shop in Hounslow, W London.

Six year old Ann Marie from Grayshott, Hants dies after being denied a bone marrow operation due to 'Health Service' cuts.

This year so far 16,595 people have been stopped and searched in Wandsworth alone. 1,372 were arrested.

**6** Garage worker Christopher Wood and another man are killed when there is a gas explosion at a breakdown garage in Bradford.

Police hit out at demonstrators in an Animal Rights demonstration in Carshalton, Surrey using truncheons covered in thick black oil. Blows left stains on victims' hair, skin and clothing and they were later picked out and arrested. 28 arrests made.

Five men in their 30's, two British and three Norwegians, are killed on a north sea oil rig when the seal on a diving bell breaks causing them to get the bends. Over 30 divers have been killed since work began in the North Sea.

**7** A tiny family sweat-shop in the basement of a house in Gravesend, Kent, explodes killing three children and three adults.

**9** Three prisoners rebel at Parkhurst top security jail. Three screws end up in hospital.

Rationalisation of British Leyland means closure of nine Land Rover plants over the next two years. 1,500 jobs will go.

In Whitehaven, Cumbria, an inquest jury return a verdict of accidental death on a Windscale worker who died from cancer. The coroner had told the jury to ignore Yorkshire television's documentary on the plant.

**14** Philip Read and Simon Starkie of Spark Bridge, Cumbria, appear before Bow Street magistrates court charged with obstructing the police. They had carried a dustbin full of estuary mud from around Windscale to number 10 Downing Street. The bin contained fish and a crab, some local sheep and ox livers and some Cumbrian sausages. A geiger counter signalled that they contained radioactivity.

**16** Over 300 people arrested at Westminster as peace demonstration blocks House of Commons. War secretary Heseltine is hit by a paint bomb and sprayed with red paint when he arrives to speak at Manchester University Tory students' meeting.

Warwick students union fined £30,000 for organising demo during visit by education secretary Sir Keith Joseph last year.

A prisoner escapes from a Kent hospital after breaking away from 2 screws.

A transporter carrying an empty nuclear waste flask collides with another lorry on the M6 near Carlisle. The transporter had just completed delivery of 150 irradiated uranium rods to the Windscale reprocessing plant from Chapel Cross power station in Dumfriesshire. BNFL have been using the M6 and A66 routes three times a week since 1980.

**18** NGA fined £50,000 for contempt of court in defying injunction on unlawful picketing.

There is to be an increase of £92 million in the prison spending budget to accelerate the building of ten new prisons. Wayland, near Norfolk, and Stocken Hall in Leicestershire are planning to open this year. Apple Thorn juvenile prison mean to open in Cheshire in 1986 and four others—Bovingdon, Hertfordshire; Gayneshall, Cambridgeshire; Swaleside, Kent; Garth, nr Preston, Lancashire are planned for 1987. A new category C prison is being built at Featherstone, Staffordshire where there is already a closed prison and the tenth prison and

by far the biggest is to be a new local prison for London, at Woolwich, expected to be completed by 1991 and have a capacity of 770.

A prison screw is held hostage for three hours in a workshop in Hull maximum security jail.

A nine month old baby being breast fed has spent over a week in a damp mediaeval police cell in Liverpool with his mother on cheques charges.

**19** The Metropolitan Police rush out 19 pages of 'radical reforms' in response to a 1,000 page study of their brutality and racism by Police Studies Institute.

**21** Process workers at Windscale (sorry, Sellafield), take and publicise the internal log report which demonstrates that BNFL had been covering up by giving false figures of radioactive waste washed up on beaches at weekend.

**23** Seven men are cleared of terrorist charges in Northern Ireland after the informer—a British ex-soldier on whose evidence alone they were arrested and imprisoned, is denounced as 'a forger, a perjurer and a thief'.

A vigilante group of university officials and students is to be set up at Manchester University after the paint spraying of Heseltine last week.

30 prisoners were evacuated from the Wyckham wing in Winchester prison after a fire started in a mattress in an occupier cell. Six screws are in hospital recovering from after effects of smoke.

600 pickets in Warrington in the greatest challenge to Government's two Labour laws of 1980 and 1982.

**29** 22 printers, 26 students and 13 unemployed appear in two special magistrates' courts at Warrington. 50 are charged with breach of the peace, 22 with wilful obstruction.

Determined to get his pound of flesh, Leon Brittan is to open a new enquiry into the Albany riots after failing in his first attempt when the High Court ruled that procedure against mutiny charges went against 'natural justice'.

## DECEMBER

**1** Hundreds of NGA pickets defy court injunction. Police close exit slip roads from M62 leading to Winwick estate.

RUC admit to killing an 80 year old woman during a gun battle in Co. Tyrone.

**2** Scotland Yard and Government step in to forbid payment of ransom by Associated British Foods for release of kidnapped executive Mr Don Today.

House of Commons approve clause in Police and Criminal Evidence Bill extending to police powers to stop and search 'all whom they reasonably suspect of carrying offensive weapons or housebreaking equipment'.

Eight firemen are injured in a fire at ICI petro-chemical works in Cleveland.



# CHRONICLE

5

SAS open fire on three men killing two and injuring one in secret operation in Northern Ireland.

The link between power stations and nuclear arms is again confirmed when at CND conference in Sheffield A. Wedgewood Benn discloses that plutonium from Windscale was sold to the Americans to make nuclear arms.

Foreseeing the impossibility of preventing further escapes from the Maze concentration camp new security measures have been introduced, i.e. more warders, wider deployment of 'quick reaction force', frequent searches and bullet proof screens in control rooms of each of the H blocks.

The number of juveniles in jail has proportionately tripled since the Criminal Justice Act earlier this year put more power into the hands of magistrates against young offenders.

6

20,000 plastic bullets have been supplied to 15 police forces in England and Wales: Metropolitan, Avon and Somerset, Essex, Humberside, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Norfolk, N. Wales, N. Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Sussex, Warwickshire and Wiltshire in case of riots.



7

After spending seven years in jail accused of murder, Mervyn Russell, 39, is freed Evidence available at the time of his trial was finally checked, proving his innocence.

Wealthy farmer Thomas Dale ploughs his Bentlev into a Citroen 2 CV rather than swerve off the road when his brakes fail. A young family of five are wiped out.

9

James Smith, a 46 year old Yorkshire miner was killed yesterday, crushed by machinery at the new Riccal mine in the Selly coalfield.

A 57 year old carpenter was awarded £155,000 for permanent brain damage sustained when he fell from a faulty joist at M Conway (Formwork Ltd).

900 angry workers at Sellafield Nuclear Fuels pass vote of no confidence in management because of contamination incidents due to a manager not reading log book and releasing radioactive sliq into the Irish Sea.

19

11 London neighbourhood advice and legal aid centres are to be closed due to government cuts.

Quote: "When we stopped eleven bricks were thrown from the top floor and six smashed into his White Princess car" (agent for Brent Tory MP re Chalkhill Estate, Brent).

Following their American counterparts (a source of many refined techniques in 'low level' 'community' policing since the riots) police will now record interrogations. People are expected to believe that this great technological innovation will eliminate the possibility of pre-confessional threats, beatings and other forms of routine torture.

London teachers demand enquiry on exploitation of children. With increasing redundancy among adults, children are becoming the breadwinners in many families with early morning, evening and weekend jobs.

BR absenteeism and self-managed time-keeping

are sabotaging the City by holding up commuters on the London-Tilbury-Southend line.

Ten workers are rescued after an explosion caused by ignition of the highly inflammable titanium tetrachloride in the Laporte chemical factory at Stallingborough, Humberside.

## JANUARY

4

Compensation is paid to six cancer victims at Sellafield plant but BNFL do not admit responsibility

5

Two magistrates courts are set aside in Newbury for 140 trials on charges of obstruction Arrest warrants were issued for 17.

6

1,200 jobs are to go at Basildon, Essex.

11

Sarah Tisdall remanded on bail at Bow Street magistrates court re "secret" memorandum from Heseltine to Thatcher naming the day of arrival of Cruise missiles at Greenham Common which she gave to the Guardian for publishing.

Blitz operation in Greater Manchester. 40 homes are raided by armed police and more than 25 people arrested during investigation of armed robberies in the area.

3,500 jobs are to go from British Rail Engineering Ltd (BREL) workshops. The company wants to cut 1,217 jobs at Swindon, Wiltshire alone. Shildon works in Durham are also to be closed with a loss of 950 jobs.

At his first anniversary speech, Michael Heseltine underlines the need to continue to give the peace movement wide media coverage 'to prevent pushing protest groups to more extreme actions'.

A former research chemist, Ronald Knight, aged 61, was jailed at Gloucester magistrates court for leaving a biscuit tin in the city's main post office and telling someone 'there's a bomb in that'.

Michael Hickey, serving a life sentence in Garret, spent his 48th day on the roof of the maximum security prison.

A riot earlier this week caused damage of about £40,000 at Peterhead top security jail.

13

600 people in South Shields and another 240 at Lambertshead, Wigan, are to lose their jobs in a 'rationalisation programme' by Plessey.

Five boys aged 13 to 15 are accused of trying to kill a policeman by knocking him off his motorcycle. Charged with attempted murder, they were released from custody at Hamilton Sheriff Court pending further enquiries.



14

The post of Chief Constable, at £30,000 a year, is to be re-advertised. It seems none of this State run gang of spies and thugs wants to stand up as ringleader, preferring the old alibi that they're all 'just obeying orders'.

17

A man aged 38 charged with attempted theft died mysteriously in a police cell in Camberwell magistrates court where he was being held overnight.

18

Scott Lithgow closure is now considered inevitable, meaning 4000 jobs will be lost in Clydeside.

19

British Aerospace and Ferranti announce 1,180 redundancies at plants in NW England.

Unemployed manual workers, who have to live on 40 per cent of what the employed are paid, are 19 times more likely to attempt suicide than any other social group according to research reported in New Society.

Leyland Trucks announce they are going to cut 1,000 jobs at its Albion plant in Glasgow, Leyland Lancashire and Watford.

## FEBRUARY

1

Three engineers working on a generator at Twyford sub-station in Berkshire are injured by an explosion in the station.

'Rate-capping' being introduced by government will cause cuts of up to 40 per cent in the London area forcing authorities to end home help services and close old peoples homes.

3

Unemployment rose by 120,000 to 3,199,678 in January.

Andrew Birch, a bread delivery roundsman, took two days off work to make a stand against Cruise missiles. He drove to Greenham Common Air Base where, headlights blazing, and horn blaring, he rammed a gate knocking a policeman 15 feet into the air.

Investigation teams set up by Norman Tebbit last year to investigate DHSS fraud are to be trained in police colleges. Lancashire Constabulary's police training school near Preston is one of them.

4

British American Tobacco announce plans to cut jobs by 1,840 at their plants in Liverpool, Southampton and Woking, Surrey.

Andrew Clemo, aged 19, threw himself under a train minutes after being sacked from his first job at the T.I. Parkray company in Belper, Derbyshire.

7

73,600 families were homeless in Britain in 1982, over a quarter of them in London. On April 1 1983, 167,000 council houses were standing empty.



The CHRONICLE will report the most significant actions in the struggle against the State, capital and oppression in all its forms. It cannot obviously be complete. Comrades with knowledge of relevant events should send a brief summary of them. The present tendency towards organised consensus and total control cannot be clearly understood through one single act of repression, but the sum of them, which we are also putting in the Chronicle, can be a useful instrument. In the same way, a full picture of a class struggle which often seems confused and barely perceptible, is undoubtedly a useful instrument of orientation towards action.



# COMISO

Comiso in Sicily is Italy's Greenham Common. A hitherto unknown little town, it now has a prime place on NATO's nuclear armaments map, having been chosen to house 112 Cruise missiles. Its similarity with Greenham ends here however, the social and economic reality of the town and surrounding area being quite different to that of Newbury. Although Comiso itself is a moderately prosperous commercial and agricultural centre, it is surrounded by poverty and unemployment, a situation that prevails among Sicilian peasants and manual workers. In contrast to what was being said by the Italian government—that the missile base would bring wellbeing and jobs to the area—the local anarchists (groups in Ragusa and Catania) set to work to give a more realistic picture. Increased economic hardship through rising prices, arrival of the mafia to the area, circulation of hard drugs, prostitution, are among the effects that this military occupation will have on the area's people. The anarchists also criticised the typical pacifist approach to the struggle which tended to see nuclear arms as a problem in themselves and made reference to complicated analyses of international politics. They challenged the approach of the political parties who professed to be against the base, in particular the Communist Party with their massive rallies and demonstrations which did absolutely nothing to threaten the deadly programme being put into effect by the American and Italian governments with the help of the mafia who hold all the contracts for building the base. They set about the massive task of preparing a popular mass insurrection which was to take the form of a mass occupation of the base. For almost two years they worked incessantly, going around the area doing outdoor meetings, leafletting, opening a tiny office in Comiso itself and helping to form self-managed leagues as the organisational form the struggle was to take. The difficulties were many—lack of funds (while thousands were pouring into the Peace Camp), police repression, threats from the mafia. There was also incomprehension by comrades who had little experience of the reality of social struggle so different to activity in and around specific anarchist groups. As time went on it became clear that the local population were waiting for words to become actions. Most of them had pronounced themselves to be firmly against the base, many agreed with occupation as the only effective way to prevent its being built on their doorsteps, and some had even gone beyond that and made specific commitments for the days of the occupation itself. But they wanted proof too that the anarchists were serious in their intentions. A date for the occupation was fixed—22, 23, 24 July—and publicised worldwide. The channels used were mainly international anarchist groups, bookshops and peace organisations. 'Everyone to Comiso' was the slogan in an appeal to the whole movement to come forward and participate in some way in what could have been a moment of great importance in Sicily and in the struggle against militarism and the State generally. What follows is an abbreviated account of what happened instead at Comiso on July 22 and 23 1983.

**H**ere is a brief account of why, in our opinion, our work during the past two years in Comiso ended with a great many bruised and beaten comrades, a passive, frightened population, and a second suggestion from the local mafia "to get out of Comiso". Does this mean that the people of Comiso prefer Americans and nuclear missiles in their land to having anarchists and punks walking around their streets? Or are there other reasons why they did not participate in what could have led to preventing the construction of the base?

**S**ince the events of the 22nd, 23rd and 24th July we have been accused of exaggerating the phenomenon of the Leagues.

"Triumphalism", 'disinformation', 'blind optimism', 'false' are some of the terms. Some say we dreamt the whole thing up. Comrades who turned up on the 22nd and did not find 'the masses' lined up outside the airport, decided after a few brief encounters in bars and hitch-hiking, that none of 'the locals' had even heard of the Leagues. This led to their feeling the need to do something, anything, to show that the anarchists were in town.

**W**e have described the Leagues as mass organisations from the start. It was pointed out that they were not trade union or syndical type organisations, but nuclei, points of reference in the optic of a self-managed struggle against the missile base. Their methods were to be those of permanent conflict and direct attack against the base. As can

be seen from their Organisational Document their aim was not to expand quantitatively. For example, in the town of Vittoria the students' League brought all the local schools out in a spontaneous strike. The object was not to get them all to belong to the Leagues but to stimulate them, through their relationship point-of-reference/mass, to discuss and face the problem of the base and how it would affect their lives. The Leagues in other towns acted in the same way.

**A** great deal has been said about our 'lack of clarity' concerning the Communist Party. References to Spain, and to popular fronts of more recent times abounded. But we too know about Spain. We are also aware of the meaning of 'popular front'. We didn't completely lose our heads.

**N**ever at any time did we foster any illusions about this party. We merely tried to put pressure on it at regional level as far as the Comiso missile base was concerned. At one point they found themselves obliged to publicly support us at a trial following arrests made after the students' strike in Vittoria. Again, under pressure from the workers at the oil refinery in Gela, they had us immediately released from the local police station when we were arrested while leafletting. We knew it would take a lot more to force these traitors to an unofficial external support of the occupation. For them this would have meant the possibility of recuperation. For us, a certain guarantee, credibility in a social reality where that party is still a force to be reckoned with. It would have gone to

wards dispelling the accusations of terrorism that had been made against us, also to reducing the possibility of a military confrontation, preventing our isolation and generally increasing participation in the occupation.

**O**ur main point of reference to the information we were circulating and the most combative, were the base of the CP. We didn't make an attack on the Party or criticise their politics. We talked instead in terms of their 'inefficiency' in the struggle against the missile site. We never had any 'base' to oppose or link with theirs, hence the absurdity of 'popular front' type accusations.

**O**ur aim was to organise a revolt. We wanted to create the essential conditions for an insurrection. An insurrection which would be limited and circumscribed, perhaps, but which was to be based on the rebellion of the people. We therefore had to penetrate the reality of their lives, their mentality, their traditions, the symbols and commonplaces of proletarian values. While others talked, we set to work.

**W**e were aware of the importance of an unofficial recognition of the occupation by the Communist Party. We also knew that would only happen if our strength forced them to. Our first indication that they felt sure of themselves was when they kept quiet after the attack on our house by the local mafia. The subterranean work carried out by the small parties in their service within the popu-

lation and the Peace Camp was beginning to bear fruit. They and the IMAC and CUDIP called for three days of blockades on the 19th, 20th and 21st July, the days immediately preceding the deadline the occupation. That this was a deliberate act of sabotage was confirmed when the organisers didn't even turn up, much to the frustration and rage of the German, Dutch and English comrades at the Peace Camp who were sincerely committed to stopping the Cruise programme. They found themselves alone in the sweltering heat. The workers went in to carry on construction work. At about 11am a few 'progressive' MPs came along to have themselves filmed by the TV cameras in front of the gates.

**S**o, the Communist Party had their alibi for not giving the go ahead for the occupation. No one had come to the blockades (yet when they want to the CP can mobilise tens of thousands), so 'the masses' were not 'mature' for direct action. Another major effect of this operation was disorientation. With so many 'days of struggle' people had become confused. By instrumentalising the Peace Camp the CP had put a stamp on the days that were to follow. Already one part of the project was lost before it had begun.

**A**s far as the pacifists were concerned, many of them were aware of the significance of the three days of so-called struggle organised by the politicians of the Peace Camp. They were tired of ideological/political discussions and among the most enthusiastic and constructive of the affinity groups which had formed to prepare the mass occupation.

**T**he punks' revolutionary impetus put all the other mistakes in the shade. It was they who made concrete proposals when it seemed that all should be abandoned. For many it was their first experience of social struggle, but they left the old 'mature' revolutionaries far behind, blinded by their various ideological positions.

**C**onsidering the nature of the situation, the presence of the Italian anarchist movement was considerable. It was small considering the numerical possibility of the movement. Some had imagined they would find 'the masses' waiting for them outside the airport. Had we been so sure of that we needn't have made such an effort to solicit anarchists' presence at such a crowded appointment. Many however were perfectly aware of the situation, having followed it actively for months beforehand. They came early to prepare the days of struggle along with the comrades of the Leagues. They were the ones who made the best working contribution to the affinity groups.

**T**hen of course there were those who had come to 'observe' and criticise. We are convinced that a great number of comrades failed to understand the situation during these three days. Which explains the procrastination, doubts and arguments. During the preceding two years we had distributed thousands of leaflets, held over a hundred outdoor



meetings, debates and conferences, had time on local television and radio. We approached, and were approached by, truck drivers, tractor owners, people with experience of trade union struggles and some who had had personal clashes with the police. In this way we built up a small network of people available for the struggle against the base. But they needed some evidence of our seriousness, our commitment, numerical strength, etc.

**W**e contacted comrades outside the area—Palermo, Naples, Calabria and elsewhere, and they in turn built up their own networks. We thus built a map of available people and means. Not a political or ideological map but a practical one. We can't go into everything here, but there were a number of trucks, tractors, equipment to build a tower in front of the base, barricades for the roads, other means to defend the occupation and make it last. But first we had to give something of our own. Certainly, if the Communist Party had decided to take an interest it would have been different. Instead, they set out to sabotage us, so that potential was lost.

**T**here was also some bad luck. And some missed appointments. For example a well known local ballad singer said he would do street concerts in the poor areas to get the women out of their homes and discuss the occupation. We knew most of the proletarian women were against the base and that they were potentially a great force in the struggle, but they needed some kind of guarantee to push them to make the first step. There is no way of knowing whether the street meetings would have been the catalyst, but that was another thing that went against us.

**T**hen there was the difficulty that comrades from completely different social and cultural situations had in communicating with the local people. This often led to misunderstandings. **B**ut to get back to the organisational work. About ten days before, when the first comrades began to arrive, the idea of forming affinity groups was discussed. Most people there already were a part of some sort of affinity group and it was agreed by all that this was the most natural and effective way to decide upon actions for the days of struggle that were to come. That way it would be possible to avoid discussing delicate topics at open meetings.

**I**t was agreed it was essential to keep in close contact with the populations of Comiso and Vittoria. This was the indispensable cornerstone for transforming our action into a mass event instead of just another isolated political gesture. A great deal of work was dedicated to this problem. A radio link was tried, but was found to be too easily intercepted. After unsuccessful attempts at a mobile radio system we decided on direct contact. We gained access to the main squares of Comiso and Vittoria for the three days and set up loudhailers, amplifiers and bookstalls with the aim of

constantly informing the local people of what was happening around the base. **O**ther actions were also discussed. It was essential, we all agreed, to avoid a head on clash with police. Being completely outnumbered, it would be impossible for us to keep the struggle going for three days. So, a number of things had to be done. Get material to as near to the base as possible, cut the fence around the base at various points, and carry out minor diversive actions at various points around the perimeter on the first day. This would also test the police's operational capabilities. Actions were carried out, and the police seldom managed to locate the groups involved. Even the local press pointed out the difficulties the police were having for the first time concerning the base at Comiso.

**T**he group in front of the airport were there to meet the local people who came out of interest or curiosity, and some comrades from the Coordinamento who were known locally were present in Comiso and Vittoria as had been decided at the affinity groups' meeting.

**F**rom dawn on the first day we realised we'd made a serious mistake in not having specifically asked comrades to arrive a few days earlier to discuss the organisational aspect. It would have been useful to have a conference somewhere earlier in the year—as proposed at the Leagues' general assembly and rejected by four comrades.

**P**eople kept arriving until late in the afternoon of the 22nd and were told of the affinity groups, but many didn't understand the situation. Some considered affinity groups 'not anarchist' and that everything should be decided at a general assembly.

**A**t the end of the first day there was a call for such an assembly. Many were confused—where were the masses? If they couldn't turn up we might as well all go home. Many were asking what should be done.

**W**e made it clear that all operative decisions would be made at a restricted meeting of affinity groups' representatives after the general assembly.

Some said that the occupation was no longer possible in their opinion and that we might as well withdraw into minor actions and proposed the absurd alternative of occupying the town hall or the local employment office. Another made this his moment to criticise not only the idea of occupation but the whole of our work until then, suggesting, to the astonishment and hilarity of those present, the formation of an antimilitarist structure at national level!

**C**onfusion grew. Criticisms of the affinity groups' decisions abounded. Some maintained that everyone should be in front of the airport. Others questioned the method of affinity groups itself. The meeting, held in the public park (taken over by the Leagues as a camp site for these three days), ended in the early hours of the morning with the proposal

to carry on discussing later at around 9am. **I**magine! For the second day of struggle the only decision was to carry on *talking*. This had an immediate and disastrous effect. Many people who were in contact with us, engaged to 'do' something against the base, declared they no longer intended to go ahead in the face of so much discussion and argument. Some stayed until the second day, and some were even present in the demonstration that was charged by the police, but only as passive observers.

**A**nother example of the effect of this inability to reach a common basis for action was that three affinity groups, a German, and Dutch and a French group—who had organised to sabotage the generator of the base and had already taken the necessary material to nearby points and were going to divide into groups to carry out diversive actions while another would go through the fence and work on the generator—faced with the pitiful spectacle of the general assembly, declared they were no longer prepared to listen to such chatter and left. They'd already spent two weeks at the Peace Camp where they'd been subjected to endless discussions on pacifism.

**W**e're not saying that a decisive attack was ruined, but are pointing out how, from mistakes, incomprehension, lack of confidence and conflicting political tendencies, no good ever comes.

**S**o, in the face of such indecision, the affinity groups' meeting could not take place as there was no common ground to start from, and because even the very idea of occupation had been put in question. Meanwhile the police were preparing.

**F**or the comrades of the Coordinamento, we knew what we had to do. The struggle to bring about the occupation had failed, therefore it was necessary to put an end to the whole intervention. There was no point in carrying out a symbolic action just to show that the anarchists were there. We had failed to do what we had set out to do because of our inability to continue what had begun with the affinity groups. But the absence of an immediate response from the people of Comiso was also a factor. We did not discuss any of the original operative proposals at the affinity groups' meeting that followed. Strag groups' meeting that followed. Strangely enough, at this meeting, those who had had most to say at the general assembly

**I**t was at this point that the punk comrades decided on a spontaneous demonstration to Comiso and the airport. We were against it for various reasons. Especially because it corresponded to all the things we had maintained shouldn't be done at Comiso—direct confrontation





with the police (this time inevitable as the demonstration was unauthorised), a symbolic gesture with no practical effect, no possibility of involving the local people.

**H**owever, we all participated in the demonstration, going through Comiso to the airport. The rest is chronicle of repression. As soon as the sun went down the police and carabinieri sent up flares and charged the peaceful crowd of demonstrators who had long given up chanting

slogans. Comrades ran to escape through the vineyards. Many were caught and beaten savagely. Some were stopped at road blocks and beaten, their vehicles smashed. Many were wounded. Six ended up in hospital.

**I**n spite of all the mistakes and our individual and collective limitations we claim responsibility for the whole intervention at Comiso including the three final days. The insurrectionalist method applied in the antimilitarist struggle in

Comiso was insufficient. Many elements prevented its correct and extended application. Both the negative and the positive aspects could not be seen clearly but only perceived piecemeal, often in a contradictory and superficial way.

**W**e think this method could be applied in other struggles. That is why we have related this experience, and are asking comrades to reflect upon it and consider its application possible in another situation during other

struggles. Naturally, we claim our involvement in the Comiso struggle beyond questions of method as we have always been against the missile base, armaments, and armies. As convinced antimilitarists and anarchist revolutionaries we are against every kind of war, all war armaments, all forms of State terrorism. But we are not for simple declarations of principle: we are not for social peace, we are for the class war and therefore for us the struggle has just begun.

A few comrades

Barcelona, on the north-east Mediterranean coast of Spain, is the capital of Catalonia, a region occupied by the Castilians in 1715, which nonetheless still retains its own language (Catalan, spoken by 7 million people as their first language) and its own customs.

For the last thousand years Barcelona has been the hub of all radical movements in Spain, from anarchism to surrealism, and has consistently been the meeting-place for the disillusioned and oppressed of the peninsula. It has resisted, in turn, the rule of the Pope, the laws of the Inquisition, the encroachments of assorted Spanish kings and queens, military conscription (1905) and fascist takeovers (1936). It has spawned a vast libertarian movement claiming its local identity, and remains the HQ of the largest anarchist trade union (the CNT).

The atmosphere there is heavy with political tension, 24 hours a day. It is the kind of atmosphere in which anything can happen, and where everyone may join in. For example on the first Catalan national day which was allowed to be celebrated (1977, a year after Franco's death) two million people swamped Barcelona, Catalan anarchists, socialists, feminists, communists, nationalists, war veterans, and there were Galicians, Andalusians, Basques there as well because it was an open day of celebration and protest, the largest popular demonstration since the end-of-war festivities in Paris. The police were terrified by the numbers and could do nothing until the crowds thinned out, when they went about their traditional shooting and beating (this time, at least, they had rubber bullets. That one I only saw in photos though that was impressive enough. But it was at first hand that I felt how powerful even a small action could become. It was the winter of 1978, in Barcelona's Picadilly Circus (the Plaça de Catalunya, where all the buses congregate), Twelve young anarchists—the oldest was about seventeen—slashed the tyres of the stationary buses, effectively blocking off the whole square. Traffic came to a standstill, crowds gathered. Jumping in and out of the subway entrances the anarchists yelled 'Freedom!' 'Long live Catalonia!' 'Anarquia!' while onlookers added further shouts. It was as if the whole area had suddenly been mobilised—large groups of people came running in flooding the square.

The group I was in went into the subway, chanting and hand-clapping, as the police moved in, about a hundred of them carrying rubber bullet guns firing shots repeatedly into the air, some of them wielding batons (one middle-aged man,

was suddenly jumped on impulsively by a copper wearing dark glasses and mouth-smoking a cigarette. He was repeatedly beaten around the head and shoulders up who had been calmly watching events,

until he ran away); then there was a cry of 'to the tables!' because the police began to arrest everyone who wasn't in the cafes. About a hundred and fifty people got pulled in. We slipped round the side

and began walking quickly down the Ramblas where small groups of armed police were standing around. In front of them some people were openly passing joints around, and an Indian woman was showing her vagina in a drunken dance to a couple of toothless old men for money. It was a tiny demonstration, but one which almost developed into a full-fledged outbreak of popular feeling. Why? Because there was popular feeling! Almost everyone was on the side of the 'disrupters' and acted accordingly. And it was started by twelve people.

The last demonstration I was on, the marchers got enraged by the sight of a Spanish flag hanging from the front of the *Banc de Barcelona*. Someone with a scarf round his face cut it down, a huge crowd gathered round it and a twelve year old poured petrol on it and set it alight while the others sang. What I am getting at is not that these demonstrations were of any particular importance in themselves, but that they showed the possibilities in a situation where the vast majority were in favour of rather than against the actions. And moments like the above are the rule rather than the exception in Barcelona.

An especially impressive example is the resistance of the CNT when two of its members were sacked from a supermarket belonging to the *Carrefour* chain in Barcelona; they were the only two CNT affiliates in that particular store, and what a coincidence that they were both sacked on more than flimsy excuses (they had had CNT literature on them—the CNT was not recognised by the company). The CNT did what they could to boycott the supermarket in question: stink bombs, leaflets, barricades on the entrances, spiking cars parked outside, and this not only in Barcelona but all over the Spanish State wherever *Carrefour* had branches. Finally the judge in the case declared the sackings illegal and the two were reinstated. *Carrefour* now accepts the CNT as a 'legitimate' union. It was a reminder that a 'union' is not what the government and management accepts to be such but what the members make it.

In Spain under Franco every movement concerned with greater freedom of working people (peasants and unemployed included) was unofficial, with the result that many Spaniards now are not obsessed with legality in the way people are here. Every time we walk like sheep past South Africa House or the Russian Embassy or a bunch of polished waiters setting up phony slogans in Whitehall to taunt anti-nuclear marchers, I think of Barcelona, where action was instant, natural, brave.

## STREET POLITICS IN BARCELONA





# VANDALISING FOR FUN NOT PROFIT

On the night of the fifth of November the Lambeth Conservative Club was raided, Windows were bricked, paint bombs thrown, red paint poured down the doorsteps and 'Tories Against the Bomb' stenciled on its walls. Oh yes, and the cars in the club's car park were spiked.

The whole thing took thirty seconds and a minimum of organisation 'Who's going to throw the bricks then? Oh, I might as well!'. It was done by a group of friends getting together to make a friendly gesture to the supporters of a political party which has contributed so much for Lambeth—more poverty, more jail sentences, more police (some of them in kinky new uniforms), more sadness, and more depression (and I don't just mean the economic kind).

Some right-minded citizens might ask: "Just what did that achieve?" THIS: A wonderful night out. It showed those people inside that being voted into power by 32% of the country in a decrepit and disgusting election does not protect them from the anger of those they imagine they were lordling it over. And above all it showed that there are people around who are prepared to disobey. That was the best thing about it. Actions like that give vent to feelings which cannot 'legally' be expressed. Feelings which are too deep, and far too human to be expressed through the machine of what the people who profit by it choose to call democracy. ('Democracy' means rule by the people: what ever happened to that one, eh?). What we did, those at the receiving end might like to know, was done with care not to hurt people. If only they would be as careful when they wield the power bestowed on them by the anonymous electorate!

What we did was another form of political graffitiing, a bit of self-expression if you like, in a country where the members of the Conservative Club will only hear the views of the influential, the journalists, the politicians and so forth (never those of the folk who live round the corner). Why? Because we don't write for glossy magazines, and we have no access to TV or radio and probably never will.

The hinge of our 'democracy' is legality—obedience to the law. The government agrees to a set of laws which are softer than the laws they would ideally want to push through all their plane, and in exchange for this softness 'we', the voters, must must obey those soft laws to the letter. That's the theory. So when something illegal is done—like a paint-bombing—every citizen who still respects the law sees one side of a reasonable contract being broken and the whole set-up collapsing like a row of dominoes. The moment, however, that anyone

tries to live a freer and better life, it becomes clear that the contract is *not* reasonable at all and that for any kind of human freedom to even begin both the law and obedience to it must go, as they are merely the devices (and clever devices at that) by which one group of people hold down another. This isn't to say we should go out and do something illegal for the hell of it and then claim we're free; but when we do something, anything, we should push the legal question out of our heads and make a personal decision, a truly responsible decision. Legality is irrelevant to human beings, and is only clung to as a guide by those who are too weak or too intimidated or, perhaps, too unsure of themselves, to think and act for themselves.

In West Germany, where demonstrations are dealt with so fiercely that they are hardly ever held, people who prefer to think and act for themselves have resorted to numerous small actions. No-one believes for a minute that because these actions are small and disconnected, they are therefore 'not popular'. It should be the same here. Large demonstrations are treated leniently—but at the same time they are ignored with contempt by the authorities they want to influence. So let's do something else. Short of exterminating us, nobody is going to get rid of our anger, and by 'our' I mean everybody who is constricted unreasonably in any way by authority in the course of their day. Anyone not included?

Wherever you live, something can be done! (and done again). If you can't afford the paint and awls, then try a mass occupation, a street blocking, an unofficial picket, or if there's only one of you then talk to someone else about how you feel, at least. And remember that what counts is what you do, not what you natter about—so you'd be better off with a group of people you know and trust at heart than with a group of people who have come together for artificial motives—like all belonging to the same party. And don't forget that what you are doing is nothing compared to the blindness, the arrogance, the stupidity and lack of human sense to be found in the set-ups you're attacking.

Obviously you know better than I do where your oppressors go about their daily business. However here are a few addresses of some of the worst and I mean the worst—50 Warwick Square, London SW1 (Victoria Tube): here you can find Roberto Fiore, an Italian fascist wanted in Italy for his involvement in various (lethal) bombings; here too is Michael Walker, NF member and editor of *The Scorpion* a far right glossy which is now selling at WH Smith outlets, and which uses Warwick Square as its contact address. Other tenants include Robin Davies

(assistant to David—the six million never died—living) and a Conservative junior minister called Nicholas Ridley.

15 Bradley Road, Chiswick, London—here lives Edward Thompson, a director of Schermuly Ltd (from Newdigate, Dorking—another address). This company specialises in the manufacture of clandestine surveillance equipment and anti-riot gear; their brochure says that they 'lead the field in all aspects of internal security and counter-insurgency operations'. Among their products you will find pocket-sized electric prod batons (clearly for the plain clothes) and several designs for concealed cameras. They're helping thugs everywhere (they've supplied 85 foreign police/military authorities). Does anyone know? Does anyone care?

South Africa House. A fairly obvious building located in Trafalgar Square, London (nearest Tube Charing Cross).

113 Grove Park, Camberwell. An unimposing building housing a joint surveillance and bugging facility used mainly by the C7 department of the Met (Camberwell SE5, by the way) Political bugging is widespread. 300 million pounds go every year to intelligence and counter-insurgency research.

93 Ebury Bridge Road, London SW1. Better known as 'Tinkerbell' this centre is devoted entirely to listening in to the phone conversations of honest citizens. For more information see Duncan Campbell's *Phone tapping and the Security State* £1.50 from most anarchist, socialist and independent bookshops (like Foyles).

I'm not suggesting that addresses like the above or any other you feel represents a threat to your freedom can best be dealt with by a quick paint job. There are as many ways of protesting as there are ideas in your head. As long as you know what you are doing, why you are doing it, what you hope to achieve out of it, and realise that what you do is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY and that you must account for it.

It helps if you can rope in as many trusted people as possible, and that one thing leads to another.

A time has come at last when people can react against the constant imprisonment of their thoughts and actions without being accused of working for a foreign power. We are working for ourselves and may they do the same everywhere in the world, east and west, north and south. Freedom begins at home. We cannot fight the powers that be directly (their weapons, in the last sixty years, have become far too powerful for that). But acting together we can undermine them until they collapse. One human being is worth more than all the destructive

machinery in the world than all the constraints and customs we take for granted, than all the hierarchical institutions which are now rusting slowly, encircled by State frontiers which have neither rhyme nor reason, than all the orders and 'yessirs' which can be heard everywhere, whether the place be 'revolutionary', 'Popular', 'Democratic' or just plain wretched. And as we go about this 'destruction' we can build as we have destroyed, with those we trust, working together on vital projects. Listening to suggestions and acting upon them as we see fit, instead of mindlessly obeying commands from our equals. I'll put it another way—if we don't act, we're finished, for good. So good luck.

George Orwell





ANARCHIST

# INSURRECTION



ISSUE TWO/50 PENCE



# COMMUNIQUE

On July 21, while working in the Ardèche in the South of France, anarchist comrade Orazio Valastro was kidnapped by three individuals in plain clothes qualifying themselves as policemen, in the town of Privas (about 100 miles from Lyons).

He was taken by car to open countryside where he was beaten and threatened with death if he refused to collaborate with the police by infiltrating presumed armed groups which exist in Paris according to the police.

Orazio was also offered financial reward. Moreover, he was questioned about the groups 'Action Directe' and the 'COLP'.

Orazio naturally refused to collaborate with the police in any way, nor did he say anything about the groups, which he knows nothing about.

On July 25 there was a phone call to Orazio's house asking for his reply, and death threats were repeated in the case of his refusing to collaborate.

Immediately after the event, Orazio denounced it to the judiciary. The case is now in the hands of Juge Borel, Privas.

We must do everything we can to defend our comrade, and to denounce the incredible machination the police are trying to bring about to his cost.

ORAZIO VALASTRO we remember, was the anarchist comrade who deserted the army in Italy, and was sentenced by a military tribunal to five months' prison for having refused, as an anarchist, to do military service. He had been living in exile in France for the past two years.  
Comrades and friends of  
Orazio Valastro

Protests against this absurd and extremely dangerous act of intimidation can be made to:

Substitut Procureur de la République,  
Juge BOREL,  
Parqué de Privas,  
PRIVAS, Ardèche, France.  
(tel. 75/642044)

French Consulate General,  
24 Rutland Gate, LONDON SW7  
(tel 01/581 5292)

## INSURRECTION

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## THE WHOLE AND THE PART

There can be no doubt about the fact that society is divided into opposing classes. The difference between those who enforce exploitation and those who suffer it is radical and irreconcilable.

Of course, there are various levels of participation in both classes. Not only the dominators, but also those faced with the perspective of exploitation are responsible to varying degrees, according to how much they consent to its continuation.

What interests us here, however, is the relationship between the exploited as a whole, and the part, or specific minority of the same.

This is not just a question of definition. Much confusion arises from misuse of the terms, or from expecting certain behaviour or events to take place that have no basis for doing so. THE EXPLOITED AS A WHOLE do not have a precise identity. Often seen as the industrial proletariat, they also include farm labourers, and the unwaged strata known as the 'lumpen-proletariat'.

Temporary workers and those in the services sectors (transport, commerce, exchange, schools, the cultural industry) as well as low level clerical workers, also go towards making up this whole.

Its characteristics are extremely fluid, and can in no way be a fixed point of reference for the aims of re-

volutionary action.

Nor is it possible to identify one substantial part of it, ie a precise class constituting a point of reference for the rest. Any attempt to do this is based on a particular political bias, usually that of the party and the quantitative illusion (ie industrial workers leading the proletariat, or lumpenproletariat driving force of the revolution).

The dominant characteristic of the whole in question is its *unionist consciousness*. This both regulates it and limits it.

Over a long period this whole has outbursts of *self-organisation* which has the effect, among other things, of nullifying attempts by the various parts to take it over. Basically, the unionist consciousness is transient and limited to short-term interests.

THE SPECIFIC MINORITY is a part of the exploited, and there are various kinds within this whole. Some have an *ethnic basis*. For example, the blacks in America, although they have their spokesmen among the dominant classes, are largely contained within the exploited and constitute a *specific minority*. The same, with different characteristics, goes for the Irish, the Basques, the Corsicans, Palestinians, etc.

At other times the minority has a *sexual basis*, as in the case of women. Other times again it corresponds to a particular attitude towards dominant moral codes, as in the case of *homosexuals*.

These minorities define themselves through selective mechanisms that are imposed by the ruling class, and which are accepted by the rest of the exploited.

These are: a specific culture (often referred to as sub-culture); subordination to the production process; considerable presence in the lower levels of social organisations; a very limited presence in the professional sectors, the media and higher education; ghetto sentiment, and so on.

This kind of minority has little mobility into higher or lower social strata. It tends to remain fairly stable, or at least stable enough to maintain a certain equilibrium. Cultural osmosis is kept to a minimum, just enough to guarantee control by the enemy over the behaviour of the minority, and to eliminate possible 'deviant' demands.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

—this is not a minority in the sense we have been speaking of. It is an *active minority* and as such is also specific. It is characterised by its level of *self-awareness*, which usually goes beyond unionist levels to prepare for action in two successive levels: the *party* (or quantitative level), and the *social* (or self-organisational) level.

The revolutionary movement usually contains all three of these levels (union, party and self-organising), and they are often interwoven, making clear distinctions difficult.

Even anarchists, who by definition support the third and highest level, of revolutionary awareness, have not failed to acknowledge unionist and party levels, although criticism has nearly always prevailed and the struggle been re-dressed.

The fact is that the revolutionary movement is partly a direct and indirect result of social and cultural changes that are constantly taking place within society: the forces of production, class composition, etc.

THE SPECIFIC ANARCHIST ORGANISATION—putting aside trade unions (and anarcho-syndicalism), and parties, a third specific solution remains: that of the anarchist group, or the coordination of various groups.

This becomes the basic instrument for the spreading of ideas and actions necessary for the social changes we want to bring about: the final destruction of today's order that is based on exploitation.

We can see then, that the specific organisation is part of the revolutionary movement, therefore also of the exploited as a whole. Through it and its level of consciousness, elements who had been a part of the dominant class can abandon their origins, and join in the struggle of the exploited against the class enemy.



# STRATEGY & METHODS

**E**xploitation is at the basis of the capitalist system. Without a terroristic dictatorship based on poverty, fear, and death by a few over the many, capital's dominion would come to an end.

This determines the class struggle. Although they seem to adapt and compromise, the exploited are constantly on the defensive and ready. They follow the enemy's difficulties with interest, regard their traitors (who call themselves their defenders) with suspicion, and wait for the best moment to rise up and insurgue.

The social clash alternates between acute confrontation and quieter spells. New theories and practices are developed that are never a simple repeat of what has gone before. Each historic moment produces new opposing sides: new bosses, new traitors, new exploited, new strategies of attack against exploitation, new attempts at repression.

Roughly speaking, we can say capital is moving from repression through use of the economic apparatus to that using the political one. In the past, in happier times for capital, wide strata of the population were prepared to offer themselves in exchange for a wage, so everything was left to illusions of self-regulating market forces. As these strata diminished, with a consequent rise in the cost of labour, or when social pressure forced employment to grow out of all proportion, the system's automatic margins of equilibrium are reduced and it goes towards more overtly political and repressive strategies. The State intervenes massively to regulate both the economic and social process. Troubles become acute, the police becoming the cardinal element in maintaining social order, with the army waiting in the wings.

The exploited's strategy also passes from a trade union type of organising—corresponding to the free market phase of capital—to a more disjointed procedure, apparently uncertain and contradictory, but which is lively and creative and more amenable to self-organisation. This process heightens the level of the struggle, possibly even allowing the use of armed struggle.

It should not seem contradictory that the exploited respond to the State's attempts at enforced order with creativity and self-organisation. Increasing repression triggers off many mechanisms, one of them precisely that of heightening the level of the social clash. Moreover, this comes as a result of deteriorating conditions where large wageless strata are no longer waiting patiently to enter the world of production, even at starvation wages. Hopes of better times, more consumer goods and better wages are far more effective reins than police or army.

## REPRESSIVE STRATEGIES AND METHODS

*Strategies* are the choice of certain methods that are applied in the social clash. *Methods* are stable and well-defined procedures, so much so that they cannot be changed, at least within the present framework of exploitation.

Whereas strategies are linked to short-term conditions and must constantly be up-dated, modified, discussed and, when necessary, declared unsuitable; methods are fixed, guaranteeing a continuity that characterises the struggle on both fronts. Strategies are constantly changing in the clash between classes, but the methods used remain the same.

As we have seen, capital uses different strategies at different moments: It goes from a free market logic to nationalised production, mixes increased productivity with less military repression and vice versa. Sometimes it intensifies consumerism, at others it reduces it, using monetary mechanisms instead of taxation. At still other times it uses overt repression, establishing a closed regime using nationalistic puppet politicians and uniformed torturers to



eliminate all dissent in bloodshed.

But all these strategies are based on four basic methods: Information controlled by the power structure. This is not only the work of the media, but also of everything that appears to be based on consultation with the people: elections, choice of work, choice of culture, use of free time, consumerism, political opinions, scale of ethical values, etc. Differentiated education of the various social classes. Not just a question of schooling, this is a continuing process. It is the method that corroborates and instills controlled information that would otherwise disappear into a void. A series of coordinated processes that produce and confirm ethical values, they are often applied at mass level, but are sometimes restricted to a minority.

Political and social reforms. Any one of power's single projects must be seen as part of a constantly changing whole. Even the most tyrannical regimes of the past moved towards adjusting and compromising with the oppressed. Absolute repression is a myth, an ideal that no reigning power can maintain for long. A mixture of pure repression and reformist compromise is always preferred. Modern democracies have gone a long way in this direction.

Terroristic repression of any behaviour deviating from the established norm. It goes from social condemnation to organised terror by police, army, courts, prisons, etc, against anyone who tries to regain what has been taken from him. In the latter case the State will use either specific organisations (police, secret services, army, etc); organisations designated to other activities, but which carry out terrorist duties when required (trades unions, parties, political movements, schools, hospitals, cultural structures, newspapers, television, etc) or specifically terrorist organisations created by the State itself, drawing from the army, police, judiciary, extreme right

political movements, professional killers, organised crime syndicates, etc.

It should be said here that any one of these methods does not exclude another, but that they are all applied at the same time with interesting results. Think, for example, of the effect the development of information is having on the educational process. 'Informatics' are still very much in the air. Basically, as we have said, repression is intensified when the other two methods show signs of slowing up and becoming inefficient. The inverse process, a reduction in State terrorism, tends to be slow as the organisations and mentalities whose usual methods are those of violence, torture and murder, tend to die hard.

## REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIES AND METHODS

The difference between strategies

and methods is constant, as it is a question of the forms of action man possesses. Whether policeman or revolutionary, cannot avoid studying the strategically different application of some basic methods.

Strategies are directly related to the conditions of the social clash at a given moment, not simply a consequence of it. The revolutionary is constantly trying to act on reality, to penetrate it and change it with his actions. But these actions, if they are to go beyond the field of illusion, must take account of the level the clash is at.

When the level of the clash is low, with wide strata of the proletariat excluded from wage-earning and capital abandons itself to irrational market forces, the revolutionary strategy will be that of strengthening the movement, penetrating the various sectors of the world of work and unemployment among workers, housewives, labourers and students.

At a higher level, capital begins to show signs of instability. The State intervenes heavily to rectify an intolerable situation created by the capitalists' inability to manage the economy. The State's terroristic repression increases, along with lack of work and 'well-being'. Here the revolutionary strategy will go towards intensifying armed attack, therefore to a progressive growth and qualifying of clandestine armed organisations.

Between these two directions—which do not contradict but support each other and interact with considerable force—there is a whole series of strategic choices. They show the profound differences existing within the revolutionary movement: the anarchist tendency towards *quality* of the struggle and its *self-organisation* and the authoritarian tendency towards *quantity* and *centralisation*.

The methods at the basis of the various revolutionary strategies can be divided as follows:

**Free information.** Keeping to events as they are, without political or ideological deformation. Of course this is often an impossible ideal, but the method of informing must strive towards this, transmitting real events as far as possible, making situations known that would otherwise be distorted by the information controlled by power.

**Theories about conditions of the social clash,** analyses of events focusing on facts and putting them in a wider context. This second methodological stage serves to make information more comprehensible, make it talk, seizing it from the dumb context of the criminally false news circulated by power.

**Intermediate struggle,** where revolutionaries intervene in particular aspects of the social conflict: schools, factories, housing estates, the land. Taken indivi-



dually, each struggle risks becoming re-absorbed and often contributes to strengthening exploitation by rectifying some of its irrational aspects. Although it is partial and circumscribed, information and theory can be understood by proletarians during these moments. Things would remain at a purely theoretical and meaningless level otherwise. It is in the struggle itself, even the limited one in defence of rights or already existing conquests, that we prepare for a possible heightening of the clash.

Armed struggle employs the method of violent attack against the State, its organisations and structures, its men, wealth and projects. The fact that this method is often part of strategies at higher levels of the social clash does not mean that it is a 'higher', or more efficient, or more revolutionary method of struggle than others. It is a different method, with its own characteristics, limitations and qualities, but which cannot be placed in a hypothetical scale of revolutionary values. One level of consciousness pushes a proletarian to hand out a leaflet in front of a factory, another to arm himself to take back what has been taken from him, or to shoot a policeman or judge. Another again pushes him to attack a factory, sabotage its production and damage stocks. Still another will make him associate with others in the same situation, men and women conscious of the need to come together to work out an attack against the class enemy. No one of these methods excludes the other. On the contrary, they interpenetrate and support each other. It is therefore never possible to positively identify one precise moment where a given method should be used. They are used together and bear fruit according to the limits and perspectives of the various strategies they are applied in.

#### THE PROBLEM OF STRATEGY

A strategy of attack is of little importance for the dreamers of revolution. There exists an illusion that truth will triumph in the end, so, like the Christian martyrs one marches onwards, holding high the torch of ideological purity, but often remaining very far from the reality of things.

In actual fact, the proletarians and exploited in general, the lumpenproletarian strata who undergo very acute levels of oppression, do not have clear ideas. The equation exploitation/clarity is not at all true. One can live one's whole life in chains, dragging them along, and still believe one has lived thanks to them rather than in spite of them. This point cannot be overstressed. Information on its own is not enough. Struggles must be developed, both in the intermediate and long term. Clear strategies are necessary to allow



different methods to be used in a coordinated and fruitful way.

As anarchists we are pursuing a qualitative growth in the movement, and support its self-organisation. We distinguish ourselves in this from the authoritarians and stalinists who support a massively quantitative growth based on total control and 'democratic' centralisation. But not for this can we wait till infinity for the people to organise with their quality and creativity. We must act more directly, moving as a specific minority. This means taking on the task of carrying out actions that the exploited, at a certain level of the class struggle, cannot develop on their own. If we fail to do this we will simply end up consigning ourselves into the hands of the stalinists, and the proletariat along with us.

Let us give a few examples:

When setting out information we must

adhere to reality as clearly as possible in order to avoid any ideological re-elaboration. We cannot expect the exploited to act immediately on reading our information, putting it to their own spontaneous use. We would be heading straight for failure, and end up circulating a horrible mixture of platitudes and meaningless generalisations. We should apply a revolutionary critique to contributions to our publications, so as to place them within our strategy more coherently. Our work will never be purely 'objective' without denying itself as information. We must force ourselves to see things as they are, not how we would like them to be. Our innate love for utopia—of great nobility and sentimentality—must take second place in the face of the need for analyses based on reality. To do this, or even to simply understand it when it is done by other com-

rades, we must provide ourselves with some basic instruments. We might as well limit ourselves to pub talk if we don't possess some basic awareness (and perhaps a bit more than that) of economics. The point blank refusal to widen our study of certain instruments such as economics, history, philosophy, State administration, public finance, etc is based on a mistaken interpretation of the anarchist concept of destruction. Anarchists are often reluctant to involve themselves in intermediate struggles. Their basic purity causes them to have nightmares. They imagine being compromised with other not always 'clean' political forces, and of not being able to compete with them at the level of intermediate claims or political sophistry. This blocks many initiatives at the simple stage of information. In so doing we are showing lack of faith in the great clarity of the anarchist discourse which demonstrates the need to refuse delegation of the struggle. Then they are surprised and almost disdainful about the fact that proletarians do not have clear ideas, fail to understand why they should not delegate their struggle to others, and continue to be conned by the professional politicians. This tragicomic situation often becomes clear in public debates, conferences and demonstrations that have been organised together with the forces of the more or less revolutionary left. The anarchists start off with great gusto, go all out to organise demonstrations, work out their own information with great precision and clarity (through leaflets, posters, talks, conferences, etc), then reach a mental block. They abandon the political management of the event to other forces. It is usually these forces who exploit the anarchists' great propagandistic energy and manipulate the media, implying they are the only ones capable of doing anything against power.

The anarchists, in the meantime, have returned to their own groups and are asking themselves how on earth, yet again, they have failed to prevent a political take-over of their initiatives. At the same time they remain prepared and available for any future requests of collaboration.

We cannot stop half way in these things. Once begun, we must continue to prevent attempts at being taken over, even using political means. After all, we too can intervene before the stalinists take over. And we too, especially when we are among the organisers of the demonstration, can get particular motions passed at the end of the conference or meeting without feeling more 'dirty' or compromised than when we set out to work with other left political groups. To brush these problems aside, considering them unimportant or pointless compromise, we risk losing the



# THE QUESTION OF THE MINERS

fruits of the intermediate work and of appearing to the proletariat as comrades who are there purely by accident, alongside other political factions that are far more organised than ourselves. This gives the exploited the idea that party leadership is indispensable, the stalinists are given a hand in their grim quantitative work, and what we had tried to build at the start is lost.

There is no need to be afraid of dirtying our hands by using methods of intermediate struggles, so long as the aims of anarchists remain clear throughout, showing up the tricks of the professional politicians and the risks of authoritarianism. This can be achieved to a certain extent by not backing out of arguments with the authoritarian political sharks. In clandestine armed struggle things cannot be left to improvisation or to the spontaneity of individuals or very small groups. This method is extremely articulate and lends itself to applications of great strategic importance along with the intervention of other methods. From sabotage and the actions of individuals or very small autonomous groups, quite wide levels can be reached, capable of drawing in dozens of groups and hundreds of comrades. It is important to note here that the qualitative development of armed revolutionary action comes into contrast with some of its indispensable quantitative needs. A few comrades cannot do much, but it is a mistake to think that a simple growth in numbers gives rise to a correct use of armed struggle as a method. Generally, what is being looked for at the organisational stage is the creative development of ideas, theories, analyses, interpersonal relations, actions, contacts with the outside, and a spreading of the strategic project. An increase in numbers follows afterwards, and in turn will have a considerable effect on the quality of the organisation. One should not go too far in either direction: neither thinking purely in terms of number, nor going to the other extreme, believing that quality is the only thing that counts. This apparent contradiction only exists when the method is seen as something immediate and circumscribed, instead of being seen in the long term.

Certain aspects of armed struggle can also be used in the intermediate stage, that of information. At this point it will not be likely to spread, but to accentuate the information itself. The 'angle' one gives to this is important. Not being 'mealy mouthed', saying things clearly, and backing them up with 'harder' forms of intervention, can stimulate an awakening of consciousness, and is a creative contribution to a quantitative growth in the future.

Alfredo M. Bonanno

For a capitalist country such as Britain to be shaken every now and again by huge strikes in the nerve centres of its economy is quite a normal matter, and in fact helps to correct the production process.

We well know that economic crises are not the exception in a country's particular situation, but that they are the rule by which the process of capitalism regulates itself.

Through a crisis, certain important results are obtained by power: it puts one's house in order, and implements a restructuring of production relations. The workers' lines are weakened, especially when so-called trade union 'combativeness' is drawn out over a long period. The bosses find plenty of excuses for introducing privatisation, relaunching archaic systems of exploitation ('black work', etc), and stepping up production, more efficient controls and generally safeguarding their interests.

On the other hand, trade union combat as seen today in the miners' strike, for example, does not increase the heighten the conflict, because it always remains under the control of the trade union leaders who, by confronting the police (as though this comic opera style heroism were the ultimate in extremism), bedeck themselves with new medals as the defenders of the working class.

We must therefore conclude that a strike such as this sets out from the very start on a reactionary basis, and is carried out using methods that plagiarise direct action, as they are rarely spontaneous, and always remain under the control of the trade union leadership.

How, as anarchists, should we act? By doing everything we can so that the bosses' and union leaders' accounts don't tally.

Their project is that of weakening

the working class. Not only Madame Thatcher, but also Mr Scargill. It is important to understand this.

A working class exhausted by the long and unproductive effort that has been going on for months will be more maleable to both Thatcher and Mr Scargill for the future restructuring of this country's productive system—which it must be said isn't going too well at the moment—requires.

But the game remains an extremely dangerous one. Important variables could emerge to thwart the reactionary project on the Scargill/Thatcher front. The ever present possibility of things going beyond the trade union leaders' control, or of the government tightening the rope too far.

For example, the miners are not being paid. That must be averted one way or another. The unions are trying to do something, and when they fail, the government must intervene (directly or indirectly) to supply the necessary funds. They cannot allow themselves to really starve the workers. If that happened, they would no longer be controllable, and would go towards forms of struggle far more serious than the banal blocks in front of the mines and steelworks, or the equally banal clashes with the police.

This is the way things have always been. During the Paris Commune, Baron Rothschild gave 1,000,000 gold marks to the Commune to guarantee and defend the Bank of France from possible assaults by the starving people. And so-called revolutionaries are always ready to fall into such traps.

Today, even anarchist groups are quite happily busting themselves collecting funds to help the starving workers, while it is quite obvious that our interests cannot be the same as those of Mr Scargill (preventing the 'degeneration of the struggle'), nor parallel to that of Mrs Thatcher (to control the

struggle so that it doesn't go beyond the point of 'no return').

They can permit themselves to have collections or to send money to the workers 'under the counter'. Not us. For us the radicalisation of the struggle is a positive fact. If the workers don't eat there will be two positive results: the clash will quickly come to a head, and it will immediately become obvious which side the trade union leaders (whose actions are even being supported by some anarchists) are on.

That is why we are against collections, which are stuff of the Salvation Army.

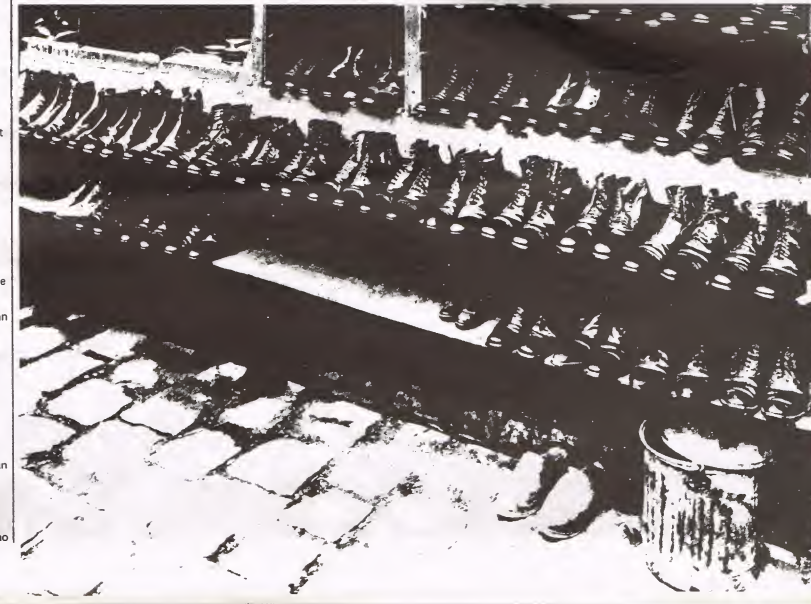
The revolutionary concept of solidarity with workers in struggle has always been intended differently—radically differently.

Revolutionary solidarity consists of two things: information, not a simple echoing of the media or trade union papers recounting the fact that the strike is going on (which everybody knows), defending one 'side' in what is a global project to save capital's economy through use of government (including the 'shadow' one) and unions. But real information, denouncing this reactionary project and reporting the actions that go beyond this logic of control.

Secondly, revolutionary solidarity consists in striking the enemies of the workers in struggle, their interests, their practical realisations, their people.

Any other form of solidarity is simply hypocrisy and guilty conscience. If we are not capable of organising revolutionary solidarity as it has always been intended, it is useless (and even harmful) to have recourse to contributions and such kinds of support. One only turns the knife in the wound of those who are carrying on a struggle they are paying for in first person.

One becomes a collaborator of those in power.





# NEW FORMS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

At a certain point in their development, capital and the State succeed in rationalising exploitation.

That is what is happening at the present time to a certain extent. Pure and simple repression is giving way to 'being involved'.

It is important to study these new forms of repression so as not to remain tied to out-of-date forms of revolutionary activity.

These not entirely new forms of involvement are now being developed in more original and highly dangerous ways.

The permissive State, although it still uses dissuasion (for example police and army), has a tendency towards dialogue, allowing a certain amount of freedom of movement and self-regulation, so that everyone is controllable at all levels.

In this way the counter-revolutionary role of so-called dissent is very important to maintaining order and continuing exploitation. Both the bosses and their servants are depending more and more on these forms of recuperation, in preference to pure repression by armed forces, although they remain the ultimate element in convincing and repressing.

So the State is asking the revolutionary movement to collaborate in maintaining social peace.

Comrades shouldn't jump back in horror at such a statement. The State can ask what it wants, it is up to us to understand whether we are being drawn into a manoeuvred consensus, or whether our dissent still has an element of rupture. The State's projects are continually being updated. One moment they are putting up a wall of repression, the next they are softer, decodifying behaviour that was once condemned and persecuted. The State and capital have no moral code of conduct. They adapt according to the Machiavellian thesis of using the brute force of the lion one day and the cunning of the fox the next.

Today might well be the moment of the fox's velvet paw.

One thing that is extremely useful to the present situation, giving capital's restructuring an aspect of a spontaneous process of adjusting, is the massive presence of 'dissent'. We must say 'no'. They are putting through anti-union laws, we must say 'no'. They are putting missiles at Greenham Common, we must say no. They are subsidising the bosses at the cost of the poorest in society, we must say no. They are building more and more prisons with

special wings all over the country, we must say no.

This no must be shouted aloud, not be a simple whisper of platonic dissent. It mustn't pass over into direct action, but must simply remain a 'minority' demonstration of disagreement. It is then up to the same government forces to explain the practical impossibility of such a choice, which is based nevertheless on the 'highest moral values'. As good a way as any to make a fool of people, to extinguish their potential aggressivity constantly in accumulation, so as to direct this impetus of rebellion towards activities that are dissent in appearance alone, and are in fact counter-revolutionary in every aspect.

This is what is being asked of the peace movement, and that is what they are supplying. Pacifism itself, as an ideology, lends itself to being exploited for the production of social peace. An indigestible mixture of Christian sacrifice and millenarian fideism, it is much appreciated by the State as a means of involvement. Even peace demonstrations that comrades are so impressed by, are an element that is much appreciated in the spectacular framework of exploitation. The fact that these demonstrations are innocuous has nothing to do with whether or not there are clashes with the police, they are recuperated on all sides because of their irregularity and passivity as far as the State is concerned, and because of their basic lack of ideology as far as the peace movement is concerned.

These new priests, clutching at the altar of their own sacrifice, are incomprehensible to people who would like to participate in struggles, but who not for that are prepared to abdicate their patrimony of violent attack against the State. This is what the State puts its trust in, their 'lack of understanding', allowing demonstrations that are forbidden to others, but intervening immediately when any signs of an outside presence appear within pacifist organisations.

The same can be said for trade union struggles, even autonomous ones, 'self-managed' ones, or those carried out under the leadership of the few anarcho-syndicalist organisations. The State is also asking them for the maintenance of social peace. Their ineffectiveness is the guarantee of their possibility of continuing. Revolutionary ineffectiveness immediately transformable into complying with the State's counter-revolutionary requests. Their function today is that of lending cre-

ducibility to the restructuring process that is taking place, at least in the most sensitive areas, extinguishing dangerous attempts at isolated actions of attack totally in discord with any kind of trade union representation.

The old criticisms of trade-unionism (and revolutionary syndicalism) are all the more meaningful today in view of the new request that is being made of them to participate in maintaining social peace. The State will listen to trade union demands, and, in the next few years, almost certainly to those of the microscopic anarcho-syndicalist centres. What it wants in exchange is the control of the minority groups who do not accept the logic of claiming. It wants control over the revolutionary movement. It is in the logic of syndicalism to accept this exchange. Otherwise it would mean throwing the syndicalist organisation and all half-way demands to the winds to return to autonomous nuclei, permanent conflictuality, and so to the real struggle.

In this sense we should look more carefully at the function the CNT has had in Spain over the past few years, its present situation and future perspectives.

Concerning supposedly attacking syndicalism, we should look more closely at the repression function of *Solidarity* in Poland, how spontaneous attempts to attack constituted order starting from the factories were repressed from the very start.

In the same way, we need documentation on the counter-revolutionary role of the movement of the new communes, the vegetarian and ecology movements, the anti-psychiatry movements and all the tendencies that are trying to split up the real contrast with power, or are trying to reduce it to simple, platonic and formal dissent.

For example there exists an anti-racism that borders on racism itself. A privileged series of peoples are put in an exclusively positive light which ends up drawing in—often without their realising it—the warmongering and racist politics of the governments acting in their name. Many decisions made by the Israeli State, for example, claiming to represent the Jewish people, are themselves racist and genocidal. So the classical positions of anti-racism become instrumental to new forms of racism, opening the road to a repression that is considered inevitable.

We can also consider all forms of strictly formal dissent and all attempts to divide the class conflict into a multitude of sectors, as being functional to power. This is exactly what the couple capital/State want to happen.

Many comrades in good faith fall

prey to this contradiction.

The best of them, those really in good faith, are only misinformed, or simply stupid due to lack of analytical clarity. They are the ones who limit themselves to great declarations of principle against nuclear weapons, or are abstentionists every time the elections come around, or hand out leaflets against special prisons, then return to their holes and wait for the next time to repeat the sacralised ritual of the eternally obvious.

The worst, those in bad faith, are the sceptics who have lost their enthusiasm of times past and now understand everything about life; and the ambitious ones trying to get a little allotment of power on which to seminate their swindles. On the one hand the super-intelligent who look down on those who are limiting themselves to carrying on with the struggle; on the other those who are advancing their careers by kissing the hands of the labour party or the asres of the dissenting church. The nausea that overcomes us on seeing the first equals only that which we feel on seeing the second at work. There are many ways of gazing at one's navel or furthering one's career, but these are among the worst.

We shall try to oppose the advancing counter-revolution with our modest strength. First of all with analytical clarity.

It is time to put an end to uncertainty or shyness. It is time to come out and say things clearly and without half measures. Beautiful declarations of principle are no longer enough, in fact they have become goods of trade for power. We must engage seriously in a struggle to the end, an organised and efficient struggle which has a revolutionary project and is capable of singling out its objectives and means. We might find that the dissection of mummies is no longer an interesting operation. The sun of the future will not rise from the old hills. We must decide to look to where the class struggle is really leading.

The article which follows of Page 7, 'Interview in Segovia Prison' and others that we shall publish in future issues of this paper should be seen in this perspective, one which we consider to be of primary importance. Although limited and insufficient, they open the way to a critique that should be of interest to all revolutionaries.

In our next issue we shall be looking more closely at the role of the peace movement today and some of its limitations. In so doing we hope a debate will develop on these problems that are becoming increasingly urgent.





# INTERVIEW FROM SEGOVIA PRISON WITH THE AUTONOMOUS GROUPS

On the problem of armed struggle; the reactionary function of the CNT; and possible future developments of the anti-capitalist struggle. By the comrades of the 'Spanish Federation of Anarchist Groups' (F.I.G.A.)

What do you mean by 'Autonomous Groups' and what, in the last analysis, is your ideological position?

Before anything else, we must point out that we don't represent the whole of Autonomy, but only ourselves, through our own experiences. We consider ourselves to belong to the area of Autonomy.

Up until the Spanish State murdered Salvador Puig Antich in March 1974, people who were acting independently, rejecting parties and trades unions and called autonomous in certain circles, had not yet worked out wider coordination to obtain greater effects. Around the time of this murder there was an unleashing of armed actions which brought with them a project of coordination with other groups of a similar character in the Madrid area.

As far as Barcelona is concerned, at the end of 1969 Autonomous Groups already existed, some of which evolved to the Autonomous Workers' Groups, falling into a narrow workerist dimension. On the other hand there were some young comrades who really engaged themselves in armed struggle, and later on formed the MIL.

In the first place we started off from a series of minimal agreements, as opposed to the classical organisations of the past which usually needed some very schematic theory to apply at all levels. In Barcelona these minimal agreements were simplified in the theoretical and practical development of the 'Platform of the Factory Workers' Commissions', an organisation created at the beginning of the 70's which united a whole series of organisations that rejected the CP's patronage. It defined itself anti-capitalist, autonomous, anti-syndicalist, anti-authoritarian and clandestine.

Up until then the Autonomous Groups had recognised themselves in the 'Independents' of Madrid, the MIL, and to a lesser extent, the GOA, having already formed an organisation with its own practical/theoretical plans and integrated in the 'Platform'. In the middle of 1974, internal disputes concerning the 'Platform' led to a number of people joining parties or unions. Others stuck to it, but with ideological nuances: anti-authoritarianism, anti-syndicalism, etc. They ended up uniting with what remained of the Barcelona groups, then with those of Madrid and Valencia.

Now we are all united by minimal agreements that can be summed up in what we have already said.

We refuse to establish or develop a new 'ideology', the ideology of autonomy. We are struggling against capitalism globally, and our coordination starts from a minimal agreement for action: *Abolition of salaried work and merchandise; Destruction of the State and any form of power; Destruction of prisons and all the State's repressive apparatus.*

We conceive of organisation as only for concrete tasks. Our practice is our theory, and we put our theory into practice.

We are against ideologies, elements of separation within the real communist movement. It would be absurd therefore to make an ideological opposition, as we are against all ideologies. What we can do is elaborate a theory of the development of capitalism today, the present state of the communist movement, our work, our successes and relative failures.

We see the autonomy of the individual as the refusal of any delegation of responsibility at any level: organisation, action, propaganda, etc. All delegation of responsibility generates power, because any delegation hands in its bill sooner or later. Real individual autonomy, and that of a group or class, is realised by taking on one's own revolutionary responsibilities, one's global responsibilities in the face of capital.

One could say then that you are against the State?

That's the least one could say. Obviously—it is impossible to imagine a State without authority.

Do you think it will be possible to re-organise life, one way or another, on the basis of anarchist principles?

One of the first points we all agree on is that, with the aim of coordinating groups, we put ideologies in second place and give priority to practice and our needs on the basis of certain minimal agreements. An anarchist can therefore agree perfectly well on that basis. There are in fact people among us who define themselves anarchists. That doesn't mean to say we support the anarchist ideology, but that, as well as being in agreement with the first definition, we are against parties, unions and salaried work.

How do you envisage the re-organisation of society then, for example human relations and those of production?

We think there shouldn't be the separation that exists today between work and study, but that a whole series of activities should exist through which work would be done. This should not be paid of course, and should be linked to the needs of the community, aiming at use and rejecting pure consumerism. We don't see work as necessarily some thing that has to be done in eight or five hours; by work we mean creativity, not the pure slavery that takes place at the present time. We see it as something based on the needs of society, not on economic benefit.

So, one couldn't say that the Autonomous Groups are a specifically anarchist organisation?

No, not specifically anarchist, nor specifically marxist. For us the coordination of autonomous groups is an organisation defined by its concrete tasks. We have already said we are leaving ideology aside in favour of a practice suited to the present social situation.

We don't want to spend years discussing things so as to give birth to a dazzling political theory then set to work from there.

We reject the alienation caused by adopting a precise ideology; and we are trying to avoid a centralisation of tasks. Each individual in any group must be responsible at the level of the coordination for action, propaganda, etc. We never delegate responsibility to anyone else, each person must accept his own full responsibility. We met and organised on the basis of concrete tasks; when these tasks disappear as such, the organisation will announce its dissolution.

What do you think of the CNT?

Well, to be clear, we'll answer that question in two parts.

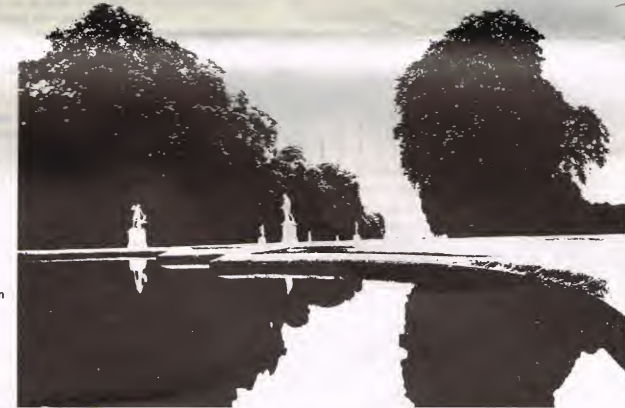
Historically, the CNT had the possibility of bringing about the revolution in 1936 after crushing the military uprising almost single-handed. Four months later it entered into the formation of a non-revolutionary, or should we say counter-revolutionary, government with four ministers. We don't agree with the idea of personal error

the green light. Those who believed the CNT to be a valid choice did so on the following analysis: it would assemble all the distinctly anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist tendencies, thus galvanising all the forces that aspired to social change over the whole country. They participated in the reconstruction of the CNT on the basis of that analysis, without for that abandoning the Autonomous Groups.

Today, after four years' experience of the CNT in the social movement, our critique is the same as that which can be made of any syndical organisation or party as an element of integration that capitalism uses to maintain its equilibrium. We also think that there are revolutionary nuclei within the CNT, but that, obviously coming into contrast with the syndical bureaucracy, they cannot evolve towards a clear position.

Can we say in that case that you are against the CNT?

Yes, in as far as it is a syndical organisation. Very well, but we must point out that we don't have any particular phobia against the CNT; it simply



on the part of Montseny or Garcia Oliver, but consider it was the organisational structure of the CNT that allowed such a situation. The CNT, which went from union to revolutionary organisation before and during the coup d'état, did not know how to come out of such a situation, congealing at the decisive moment. After that it was towed along by a government that was almost as reactionary as that which brought about the coup d'état.

At first, the re-constitution of the CNT revived the argument within the Autonomous Groups. Some found the possibility of change represented by the CNT valid; others thought it was a political mistake favoured by the mirage that things change with democracy. They also thought an analysis of the evolution of Spanish capitalism and the workers' and social movement was necessary before giving the CNT

enters the critique we make of unions and parties, to the extent that we do not consider them adequate instruments for a social revolution.

Without doubt it has happened that some of those among us have belonged to the CNT at individual level, and connections and responsibilities have been drawn from that. In fact, when the Barcelona ones fell, both the police and capital's propaganda apparatus did all they could to make them into the 'armed wing' of the CNT; the thing was repeatedly denied in front of both the Guardia Civil and the judges, and in communiques later sent out of prison. At most the police found some CNT membership cards at some of our homes because some joined at the beginning; but what the police presented as a 'find' doesn't correspond to reality.

What do you think of the FAI?



Do you think the revolution is viable today, bearing in mind above all the macro-structure of capital and the means of communication, etc?

We think the French movement of May '68 demonstrated clearly that conditions for a social revolution were really present, with a greater possibility in the countries where capitalism is more developed.

It seems to me that there is a contradiction in what you are saying, because over-developed countries such as the United States are further away than ever from revolution. That's how I see it at least. What do you think?

None of us know the United States, but we do know countries like Italy, France, etc, and we think the conditions for a revolution exist.

You don't think that May '68 was a failure in as far as nothing concrete crystallised, and that nothing of the possible conquests has survived?

We absolutely don't consider it to have been a failure, but quite the image of a revolution possible in a developed country. There was equally a rupture with the traditional left—which was framing and capitalising proletarian revolt and which it then became a mechanism within the capitalist system.

What we did find negative in the revolutionaries of the French May was their incapacity to take advantage, as they could have done, of the fact that the trade unions and parties showed themselves up as elements of capitalist integration. The parties and unions are the left and the extreme left of capital. Their programmes are purely those of capital; they only want to improve its management, not reject it. Only the situationists drew the right theoretical conclusions at that time. May '68 was the seed, not the death, of contemporary revolution.

Well, you say you are making the revolution by yourselves; and for the moment?

But of course, we are certainly not irrational. And at least we are working out an analysis of the environment we find ourselves in, of all the forces that are intervening, in order to act accordingly in a determined way. We believe that it is in analysing the enemy that you find your allies.

So you will agree with Bakunin's formula when he says, 'The freedom of others is the condition of my own freedom'.

Of course! You've said it, well done!

Do you think that with your structure you will succeed in the subversion of the capitalist social order and the base that supports it?

Yes. But we repeat that the coordination of the Autonomous Groups was created for the organisation of concrete tasks and, in some way, as the only means that will lead us to revolution. Given that the coordination of

Autonomous groups is not a traditional organisation, in the face of a concrete situation different to that of the present time, we are ready to reconsider our form of organisation.

At the moment would you have no confidence in any organisation other than the Autonomous Groups?

First of all, we don't claim revolutionary exclusiveness. In fact, we think one can disagree with an organisation at theoretical level and, on the contrary, be in complete agreement with its practice. All that is relative. In the same way we believe that an organisation will reach one end or another, according to the means it uses.

Do you think you will get out of prison thanks to a pre-revolutionary situation, an amnesty, or rather that you won't be out for a long time, given the heavy sentences the procurator is asking for? And, do you think a revolution is possible today?

In reply to the first question, we would say we are trying not to forecast the future, but to transform it. As far as the second is concerned, who wants to say 'today', with ten or fifteen years' delay? Yes, then, and the sooner the better. We think the objective conditions already exist; only the subjective ones are lacking.

Good, but do you think that a revolution is possible at national level?

No, we don't think that in absolute. It would take at least the participation of half of Europe for there to be a certain chance of extension at world level, and for it not to end up like Russia, China, Algeria, Cuba, etc.

Let's come back to amnesty. Do you think there will be some kind of struggle in prisons, especially now that there is talk of a possible amnesty for the Basque prisoners?

Yes, we see the possibility of a struggle for amnesty inside the prisons, but linked to a context of generalised struggle in the streets. It has been demonstrated that alone, we can be kept quiet as soon as they want us to.

On the other hand, if there were an amnesty, but with the present level of repression still existing, the prisons would fill up again in no time, and probably with some of us again. Consequently, such an amnesty is a pure illusion.

Do you consider yourselves political prisoners?

No, we consider ourselves prisoners of the system.

What do you think of common law prisoners?

What one calls common law or 'social' prisoners are a consequence of the capitalist system's irrationality and anti-natural character. It's no coincidence that the majority of them come from the proletariat. They have tried to escape the poverty capital as it has

sentenced them to, without taking account of either social or production relations. Some have acquired a revolutionary awareness through the struggles in the prisons. We have had both positive and negative experiences with them, just as with those who call themselves political prisoners.

We think they have the same revolutionary possibilities as a worker; and, like him, everything depends on what he does about it.

What do you think of the prisoners who find themselves in prison for having tried to get into capitalist roles?

We refuse prison, even for a bourgeois; it only makes sense in the capitalist system. We think that in a communist system, all anti-social habits should be discussed by all the members of the affected community and an adequate solution be found for each individual case.

Prison, and this has been confirmed, gives no positive results. It only exists in so far as the capitalist system is not capable of resolving its own contradictions.

Including the fascists that are locked up at Ciudad Real?

We repeat, each concrete case must be studied and find its solution through the community. We think that in the case of the fascists of Ciudad Real, they would get a bullet through the head, and that they will get it!

Have you anything to add to this interview?

Of course, we have a lot of things to say, but we'll wait for another occasion so as not to exhaust you.

# INSURRECTION

Every new idea and institution, all progress and every revolution have always been the work of minorities. It is our aspiration and our aim that everybody should become socially conscious and effective; but to achieve this end, it is necessary to provide all with the means of life and for development, and it is therefore necessary to destroy with violence, since one cannot do otherwise, the violence which denies these means to the workers.

Naturally, the 'small numbers', the minority, must be sufficient, and those who imagine that we want to have an insurrection a day without taking into account the forces opposing us, or whether circumstances are in our favour or against us, misjudge us. In the now remote past we were able, and did, carry out a number of minute insurrectionary acts which had no probability of success. But in those days we were indeed only a handful, and wanted the public to talk about us, our attempts were simply means of propaganda.

Now it is no longer a question of uprisings to make propaganda; now we can win, and so we want to win, and only take such action when we think we can win. Of course we can be mistaken, and on the grounds of temperament may be led into believing that the fruit is ripe when it is still green; but we must confess our preference for those who err on the side of haste as opposed to those who always play a waiting game and let the best opportunities slip through their fingers for they, through fear of picking a green fruit then let the whole crop go rotten!

Errico Malatesta

(October 1979) *Umanita' Nova*, September 6 1921





ernment cut down on pirate radio stations. /Home secretary Leon Brittan discloses that over 20,000 plastic bullets have been purchased by police in England and Wales. /Met police announce tests of water cannon. Home secretary says there 'may be circumstances where further equipment may be required'. A range of alternatives are available.

**FEBRUARY 23 1984:** Ballistic experts investigate damage to parked car near Pirbright Army Ranges, Camberley. 2½in jagged hole in Volkswagen beetle was caused by a missile or shotgun fire travelling at high speed and broke through the window on other side. Had anyone been in the car it would have gone through their head. 3 people have been shot by stray bullets from that range to date. /Two Greenham women held. They were seen at 2am between perimeter fence and silos on S side of airfield. Women heard 'two loud bangs like shots' after refusing to obey orders to lie down. /GYT admits to using soldiers 'for years' in chemical warfare experiments. /Coal boss Ian McGregor pushed to ground by striking miners in demo of 600 at Ellington Colliery, Blyth, Northumberland. /Thatcher rejects offer by TUC general secretary Len Murray for TUs at GCHQ to give up all industrial rights and keep only nominal membership of unions.

**FEBRUARY 24 1984:** More than 10,000 people are being held prisoner on remand in SE region.

**FEBRUARY 27 1984:** Farmer Richard Markham of Home Farm, Henton denies criminal damage after labourer Roy Tapping loses an arm in faulty farm machinery.

## MARCH

**MARCH 1 1984:** Air Marshall Sir Michael Giddings, deputy chief of defence staff is having his house on round the clock police watch following 600 letters, a parcel of shit, and 2 deputations to his home as 4,000 registered protesters try to prevent widening of Archway Road. /Increases of up to 30% will take place in health service charges over the next two years.

**MARCH 3 1984:** Secretary of State for Wales hit by rotten eggs and oranges and stink bombs are thrown obliging him to abandon an address to conservative students at University of Wales, Aberystwyth by protesters against education cuts. /At High Wycombe two 160 ft cranes are scaled and occupied as well as some smaller ones and a deep bunker at the RAF Strike Command headquarters being built in the compound. /3 women are held after flogans are daubed around the Mall shopping centre and council offices. /London cinema plans to show 10 'forbidden' films to highlight censorship of home videos.

**MARCH 5 1984:** Scotland Yard confirm that detectives are investigating beatings by screws in segregation wings at Wandsworth prison following protests in January against increasingly harsh regime. /10 million TU members are to meet sharply increased contributions. /3 men are killed when the derelict flat they are squatting catches fire.

**MARCH 6 1984:** 56,000 miners are about to strike over pit closures. Manager of Yorkshire Main Colliery hit by stone thrown by picket. /12 women evicted from Greenham Common peace camp.

**MARCH 7 1984:** Unilever has referred

more than 700 people to skin specialists to examine rashes caused by one of their washing powders. 5,000 wrote to the company complaining of skin rashes as a result of this domestic chemical warfare. /Deputy governor of Maze Prison brought to justice. Over and above his official role as State incarcerator he was known to have organised and directed beatings of prisoners. /Association of Metropolitan Authorities reckon it will take over £5,000,000 to render habitable council dwellings that have been hastily built with inadequate materials. /Police chief of New York and New Jersey Port Authority visits Railton Road and imparts some of his latest refinements in policing ethnic minorities to his London buddies.

**MARCH 8 1984:** 4 workers survive due only to their own ingenuity after spending more than 3 hours trapped in a tunnel filled with poisonous fumes in Staffordshire. /19 women arrested outside British Film Academy in Piccadilly where American sponsored military technology seminar is being held. /Government tries to bribe young miners into voluntary resignation by improving redundancy rates. /50 14 yr. old schoolchildren at George Green comprehensive school in Manchester Road, Isle of Dogs, gather outside school gates and refuse to go in after asbestos found in classroom.

**MARCH 9 1984:** McGregor announces cut of 4,000,000 tonnes in coal production next year and intended closure of 20 pits and loss of 20,000 jobs. /3 women on trial for breaking into traffic control tower at Greenham. /60% of population will be affected by Health Service clause limiting supply of NHS spectacles to children under 16 and people 'on very low incomes'. /Ministry of Defence are to pay out £31m on biggest exodus of British armed forces on the continent in Operation Lionheart involving 130,000 British servicemen, almost ¼ of which will be transported to W. Germany. 57,700 will be sent by air and there will be 82 boat departures from Folkestone in the first half of September. /Cruise convoy leaves Greenham Common shortly after midnight, its 12 huge vehicles taking protesters by surprise.

**MARCH 10 1984:** NCB will not take action against flying pickets under 1980 Employment Act for fear of worsening dispute. /Bosses to get more Government money for YOPs—increased from £1,950 each to £2,050 from September.

**MARCH 13 1984:** Heseltine proposes centralisation of Ministry of Defence, which would greatly strengthen the role of Chief of Defence Staff. /Notts NUM president Ray Chaddburn and area manager Henry Richardson issue public statement condemning Yorkshire pickets. /There are 131,000 empty houses in London (at least): Southwark 4619, Hackney 3203, Lambeth 2280, Islington 22224, Lewisham 1657, Tower Hamlets 1570. /Women at Greenham Common padlock and super-glue exit gate after convoy drives out. /Pickets close S. Wales coalfield. 10 pits closed in Scotland.

**MARCH 14 1984:** David Martin, jailed for 25 years for wounding a policeman, is found hanging in his cell at Parkhurst prison. /More than 2,000 miners are on the move as flying pickets succeed, often through strength in numbers, in closing 14 out of 25 Notts. pits, all 5 in Lancashire, and 8 out of 9 in Derbyshire.

**MARCH 15 1984:** Diary pages disappear from Brixton prison office containing



names and addresses of some of the guards. At one address in Penge, S. London, live at least 25 screws and their families. /Flying pickets defy court order and return to pits. /Banks give boost to industry by cutting interest rates. /Budget gives rich another chance to get richer through capital tax transfer tax hand-outs. 15% VAT added to fish and chips and other takeaway food. /Senior magistrate in Bradford says 4 out of 10 people appearing before him cannot afford to live within the law, and refuses to jail or fine unemployed parents.

**MARCH 16 1984:** Picketing miner David Gareth Jones aged 24 is killed, crushed during clashes with police at Ollerton, Notts. /NCB given go-ahead to sue Yorkshire miners. /Sergeant Ian Speed, who 'was being careful I did not do anything to restrict his breathing' (James Davey's, who at the time was handcuffed with 2 pairs of cuffs and his legs were bound with rope), released his head-lock after his mates told him the man had gone blue and had stopped breathing—inquest continues. /Classroom block at Purbrook Junior School, Waterlooville, Hampshire burnt down Tuesday night —£75,000 damage. /Westlands School, Sittingbourne, Kent, broken into and furniture smashed and videos taken.

**MARCH 17 1984:** Upper Heyford—300 protesters clash with police. Sections of perimeter fence torn down and dozens invade the base until they are driven back by police and dogs.

**MARCH 20 1984:** Struggle between women and council workmen trying to evict them from the Blue Gate at Greenham. The York to Hull motorway is closed off when police see an abandoned car with a N. Ireland registration parked in a lay-by outside women's toilets. A remote control robot is used to blast the boot open—the bomb wires turn out to belong to a stereo and speakers belonging to an 18 year old soldier who had run out of petrol. /Animal Rights supporters sabotage computers and lab equipment at a top research centre. /3 cages of rats are also freed from the Institute of Psychiatry, Denmark Hill, Cambridge. 42 pits are now left working, the remaining 124 are at a standstill.

**MARCH 21 1984:** Trial at Old Bailey of a group of tenants from rat infested Fair-

lop Road, Leytonstone where they had been sent by DHSS. They had organised to defend themselves with molotovs against skinheads hired by the landlord at £10 per head to evict them. /Some doctors complain about medical records being held on Databank and subsequently passed on to police, customs and excise, inland revenue, social and education dept. computers. /Children stage lightening strike in support of miner fathers. Police are called when they form a picket line outside comprehensive school in Yorkshire coalfield after notice appeared on school notice board 'all out at 1.15pm—meet at the school gates'. /Epperstone Manor police training school nr Nottingham is one of the bases they have been billeted to in the war against the miners. /Chesterfield Council evict 140 police from entertainment hall they had taken over.

**MARCH 22 1984:** Miners' strike figures according to Scotland Yard: 4,600 pickets at 43 sites; 7,000 police mobilised. 96 arrests since last week.

**MARCH 23 1984:** Sarah Tisdall jailed for 6 months for publicising date of arrival of Cruise missiles, thus breaking her pledge of loyalty to the State. 25,000 people a year are accused of shoplifting in London.

**MARCH 26 1984:** Massive police operation to evict inhabitants of Effra Parade squats. 130 Police, many in riot gear, flank Lambeth Council demolition squad. They came into the street at 4.30am and were met by barricades and a barrage of bricks and debris. The battle lasted for some hours. 6 comrades arrested.

**MARCH 27 1984:** Several hundred miners close 12 mile stretch of motorway. Others drive in convoy at 5mph up and down A1 between Wadworth and Blyth nr Doncaster. 80 arrested. /5,600 extra police are on duty confronting an estimated 2150 pickets at 28 working collieries. Most were drafted, some are volunteers, egged on by the promise of huge overtime payments. A 'mutual aid' (their definition) system is being run by David Hall, Chief Constable of Humberdale, and President of the Police Association Andrew Sloan, Chief Constable of Bedfordshire, that came into force in 1981 when riots spread throughout the country. The aim is to rapidly deploy riot trained police to any part of the country. Both the Home Office and the



Police Association are insisting that this is in no way an embryonic form of national police force. It is being run from the 13th Floor of Scotland Yard by Association of Chief Police Officers with liaison officers from the Home Office. /There are about 4,600 miners picketing 85 sites. Deployment of 5,800 police.

**MARCH 28 1984:** More motorway 'go-slows'. Major roads blocked by miners' cars. Pickets abandon vehicles en masse on A 38 a mile from Derby.

**MARCH 29 1984:** Extensive damage to weighbridge office at Hem Heath caused by fire bomb. /21 pickets arrested at Blyth Power Station, Northumberland. /Prince William Barracks, Grantham, Notts' requisitioned by 500 police. /Stop the City —Road blocks, leafletting, flag burning, picketing of banks, burning of UB40s, bank windows smashed, singing, chanting takes place on the last day of the 'financial year'. 396 arrests. /At Greenham Common women use their bodies as barriers to block Cruise missile convoy of 26 vehicles. They force the missile launcher carrier onto the verge, smashing a sign on the fence. One man tried to ram the convoy with a Volkswagen car.

**MARCH 30 1984:** 46 year old Clementine George, tied to radiator and beaten in the stomach, arms and chest by police when they ransacked her home to search for her son, gets damages award in High Court. /British Telecom due to make £1 billion profit, is to be sold off by government as part of its privatisation programme. Services and jobs will be cut. /Washington, Tyne and Wear, has been chosen as site for Japanese car company Nissan. They intend to be in operation by 1986, and unions have given fullest cooperation to maintain the 'simple system' favoured in Japan, for the 400/500 workers they intend to employ there.

## APRIL

**APRIL 1 1984:** Confederation of British Industry forecasts that economic growth in Britain could continue well into 1985. /Unemployment continues to rise. /Maintenance workers Leslie Downing, 55, Kevin Donnelly, 30, and Robert Ramsay, 36, were blasted to pieces at British Steel Works, Lackenby, nr Middlesbrough. /New Rent Act is being prepared, aimed at increasing private sector rents and encouraging new landlords. /Police reinforcements drafted into Lancashire area. /BNF confirm there was a leak of radioactive material at Sellafield in January.

**APRIL 2 1984:** 120 pits are on strike, 40 are working normally.

**APRIL 3 1984:** Police Federation confirm that constables on picket line duty are getting £400/500 a week. /NUR step in to save British Rail, who had suspended two drivers for refusing to cross NUM picket lines, supplying replacement drivers and showing where their loyalty lies. /RUC Constable John Robinson, on trial for murder at Belfast Crown Court concerning the shooting of unarmed Seamus Grew, 32, and Roderick Carroll in Armagh 15 months ago is cleared by Judge MacDermott. During the trial Robinson recounted how 3 senior police officers were involved in concocting a story to stage a cover-up and give the impression that

Grew was shot after he went through a police road block. /Families returning from holiday lock themselves in their cabins on overnight Hull/rotterdam ferry terrorised by drunk and brawling soldiers. /800 civil service jobs to go. 650 Job Centres are to be closed down. /4 marine corporals are accused of brutality to young recruits at Lymington marine training centre. /12 young servicemen are being questioned about drug-taking at RAF communications centre, Digby, Lancs. where NATO signals linked with GCHQ, Cheltenham are handled.

**APRIL 4 1984:** At 6 am over 300p police tear down shelters and tents at Greenham. A 2 mile stretch of the A339 road was closed and a cordon formed around the camp. Balliffs ripped down 18 tents, and returned in the afternoon to evict women from 5 other gates. 32 arrests were made. The operation was supervised by Mr Wyn Jones, Ass. Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police. /27 year old lorry driver Nigel Green was killed on the A2 when the lorry he was driving crashed and his load, 62 drums of toxic methylene chloride spilled. /More than 300 pupils were suspended after riots at Maxborough School. School. 150 pupils were involved in the riot where bricks were thrown and desks smashed in protest at two pupils had been sent home because of their 'spiky haircuts'.

**APRIL 5 1984:** Nearly 100 women return to peace camps outside gates at Greenham Common.

**APRIL 6 1984:** 2nd reading in House of Commons of government backed Trespass Bill which will lead to fines or up to 3 months jail or both. /Nottingham NUM leaders vote 2-1 to defy picket lines. Steel unions decide to work normally to safeguard jobs. Transport union branches offer to drive coal to keep steel works open. /AMAC

**APRIL 9 1984:** Several hundred angry strikers converge in streets leading to union offices in Sheffield where NUM executive meeting is to be held. /Moderate leaders ask for a shift in venue. /120 pits are closed. /

**APRIL 9 1984:** Several hundred angry strikers converge into the streets leading to the union offices in Sheffield where a NUM executive meeting is being held. /Moderate leaders ask for a change in venue. /120 pits are now closed. /Sir Trevor Jones, leader of the Liberal group of Liverpool City Council, is recovering after being attacked by a group of 15-18 year olds shouting 'Trevor Jones, fascist', followed by kicks and a hail of stones.

**APRIL 10 1984:** Trade union membership fell by 600,000 in 1982. /About 100 pickets are arrested outside two pits in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire after police are taken by surprise by 'mass raids' by more than 1,000 strikers. /More than 40 miners are remanded on bail at special sittings in magistrates' courts at Chesterfield and Mansfield. /Sarah Tisdall is refused the right to appeal against sentence. /Complaint made by miners about police methods which include: road checks, vast numbers on picket duty, telephone tapping, use of provocateurs, indiscriminate arrests, and those arrested being held handcuffed for hours and grilled about political leanings. /The use of 'supergrasses' has led to 1,000 charges in two years in N. Ireland, 20 of them murder.

**APRIL 11 1984:** Bunches of twisted 4in nails found on the road outside Silverdale Colliery near Stoke-on-Trent. /19 women are arrested inside Greenham airbase on Monday night after cutting through the peri-

metre fence. /Sheffield is under siege from 3am. Fighting breaks out between police and miners outside NUM headquarters. /Miners' wives picket Yorkshire Electricity Board demanding a freeze on electricity bills. /4 Sheffield women face charges of damaging a chain link fence at BNF Capehurst, Sheffield on March 25.

**APRIL 12 1984:** Almost 1,000 miners, 491 in Nottinghamshire, have been arrested in the 5 weeks since the strike began. Many have already appeared before magistrates and are on conditional bail. /MPs are worried about the privatisation later on this year of the Royal Ordnance factories which produce ammunition arms and grenades for the Armed Forces, as they will be protected by unarmed private sector guards instead of the MOD armed police as they are now. /Miners go towards all-out strike after crushing defeat of 'moderate' NUM leaders to call a ballot. /Lead filled bottle caps with four protruding screws have been used against police on some picket lines. /Day of mass demos. Drink cans and rotten fruit rained on Nottinghamshire NUM president. He was pushed and jostled before being escorted away by police. After a day of mass demos Chadburn, Henry Richardson (secretary) and Trevor Bell (white collar secretary) are roughed by a part of the 3,000 strong crowd. 53 arrests. /4 brothers are jailed for actual bodily harm and for making an affray at Aylesbury Crown Court for attacking two policemen trying to make an arrest. Their attempts failed when people poured out of their homes in High Wycombe to prevent them, and the man escaped.

**APRIL 15 1984:** Coal boss McGregor says troops may be used to move coal stocks.

**APRIL 16 1984:** Association of Public Analysts say one third of the fresh fruit and vegetables sold in Britain contains considerable pesticide residues, and that nut products often contain aflatoxin, a powerful carcinogen.

**APRIL 17 1984:** 122 pits are on strike, 43 producing normally. /At Grimethorps Colliery cardboard is stuffed into the fuel tank of a coal lorry and set alight. /Farmer Richard Markham, Home Farm, Henton, Oxfordshire had been warned twice about lack of safety measures before the 'accident' occurred which left 34 year old labourer Roy Tapping without an arm. It was severed on a baling machine. /police investigate arson on HMS Victory, Portsmouth.

**APRIL 19 1984:** 7,000 miners demonstrate outside Sheffield City Hall.

**APRIL 20 1984:** Deadly asbestos waste is found on a Sheffield rubbish tip near a childrens' play area. It had been dumped there by a contracting company.

**APRIL 25 1984:** Miners demonstrate about jailing of pickets.

**APRIL 26 1984:** More than 30 S. Yorkshire miners' wives march to Nottinghamshire after their bus is





turned back by police. They were on their way to set up a soup kitchen at Ollerton.

**APRIL 27 1984:** A train carrying nuclear fuel rods to Sellafield Re-processing plant, Cumbria, collides with a car at an unmanned level crossing./House of Fraser increase their profits (including proceeds of £545,000 insurance payment after Christmas bombing) by 25% to £38.8million./£3,500 damage caused to an open cast coal mine at Strawbridge, Ilkestone, Derbyshire—a bulldozer was crashed, and wiring and windscreens smashed on 4 other vehicles, whose engines were left running until they seized.

**APRIL 28 1984:** Trial of 17 year old farm labourer Peter Wilson, who paid a midnight visit to a stinking maggots factory and set fire to it, destroying it, after appeals by local residents to authorities, MPs, etc to have it closed were ignored.

## MAY

**MAY 1 1984:** Magistrates' fines double to a maximum of £2,000. Maximum penalty for a small damage offence, for example, is now £1,000./Of about 45,800 people detained under PTA last year, 141 were charged with offences./3 Indian sisters aged 15, 18 and 22 kill themselves with car exhaust fumes after a family row about arranged marriages./A train carrying toxic materials falls off a bridge into the River Caldwel./Fighting in the streets of Mansfield between 'Right to Work' rally and pickets, with stone throwing at police. Thousands participated on all sides./Wivenhoe Port, Essex, is brought to a halt when over 100 miners and Essex University students block the entrance to the wharf where coal from other parts of Europe is being unloaded. 69 arrests./Hampshire police charter a Boeing 737 to fly 120 police officers to picket lines in Notts. coalfields./More than 1,000 people in Sheffield's Broomhill council flats are to be evicted and the flats (built in the 60's) to be demolished./A 20 year old council worker worried about becoming unemployed due to privatisation, drives into the Derbyshire countryside and kills himself with exhaust fumes./4 S. Yorkshire miners are released after nearly two weeks in jail on obstruction charges. They were arrested on a slip-road on the M1 on April 20. Another 18 miners are fined a total of £930 for obstruction after a special delegates' conference last month in Sheffield.

**MAY 3 1984:** More than 1,000 pickets at Golbourne, Lancs. More than 2,000 pickets, many from S. Yorkshire invade police blocks and invade the pit village of Cotgrave./25 Kent miners are arrested at Wivenhoe Port while imported coal is being moved on to lorries.

**MAY 4 1984:** The Asian community of Brick Lane, Tower Hamlets, begin a vigil outside the house where the husband of Afia Begum was killed in a fire, to protest against her arrest after 15 weeks in hiding to avoid deportation.

**MAY 6 1984:** Mansfield rally. About 2,000 present./7 men drown after

their fishing boat is wrecked off Flamborough Head, Yorkshire.

**MAY 9 1984:** 5 pickets are injured and 65 arrested when mounted police are used to escort a lorry convoy leaving Hunterstone ore terminal on Clydeside for Ravenscraig steelworks. Horses ploughed through the 1,500 demonstrators present./Trial of police constable Brian Renton, ex RAF boxer, who hit 36 year old Barry Carbiell with such force that he had to have his left eye removed, leaving him blind as he had already lost the sight in the other eye through an accident at work./Detectives interview pupils at Stowe School, Buckinghamshire, after a sports pavilion is destroyed by fire, causing £25,000 damage./Chesterfield labour council decide to

allocate £50,000 from reserves to 1,000 families of striking miners./Another 32 pickets are arrested at Ravenscraig.

**MAY 10 1984:** The Coal Board mean to reduce manpower in the mines from 179,500 to 159,500 by next year. Over 7,000 miners have used the telephone answering service to enquire about new redundancy rates.

**MAY 11 1984:** 292 pickets are taken to Glasgow police stations and charged with obstruction after 8 buses on their way to Ravenscraig were intercepted by police./A coach taking 20 clerical staff to the NCB office, Duckmanton, Derbyshire, is stopped by pickets./Nearly ¼ of all the council tenants in Britain are in rent arrears. At least £240,000,000 is 'owed' to local authorities./6 lorries were sabotaged yesterday near the Port of Wivenhoe. Brake pipes were cut on 4 tractor units and 2 trailers at a yard 3 miles away at Ardleigh, nr Colchester./NUM strikers stage a sit-in at the coal board office in South Wales./A Derbyshire miner is remanded in custody by Mansfield magistrates after a fire destroys a cabin near Rufford Colliery. Shaun Buxton, 21, is accused with 4 others of conspiring to cause damage to NCB property or employees. The others were given conditional bail.

**MAY 12 1984:** 2 men are feared dead after falling from North Sea gas drilling rigs, one off Norfolk and the other off the Humber Coast./The Japanese company, Hitachi is shedding more than 500 jobs at its television factory in Mid Glamorgan 6 weeks after buying out GEC's share of it./437 soldiers serving in W. Germany have disappeared in the last ten years./A petrol filled milk bottle is thrown at timber on the quayside at Wivenhoe./Leon Brittan announces special subsidies will meet the cost of policing the miners' strike, now estimated at £25million.

**MAY 14 1984:** An arson attack destroys a signal box on the rail link between Ollerton Colliery and High Marnham power station. Effects of the blaze are estimated at £100,000./200 miners' wives are to join the picket lines at British Steel's Port Talbot plant to ask them to stop foreign coal imports./Thousands of miners' wives participate in a mass rally in Barnsley, where 10,000 demonstrators were present./A 22 year old prisoner accused of a £34,000

robbery leaps free from the dock of Sheffield Magistrates' Court./Strikers intensify action against power stations. In Ramsgate, Kent 30 miners are arrested on a picket line at the harbour where more than 200 had gathered to prevent oil from being transferred from tankers to Richborough power station./20,000 miners and their wives gather in Mansfield in the biggest demonstration yet. 40 police are injured when struggles start in the market place. 88 arrests /A group of miners' wives and children barricade themselves in a youth club in Clipstone, Notts. after being denied facilities to make meals for strikers and their families.

**MAY 15 1984:** 57 men, 54 of them miners, are charged with riotous assembly in a special Mansfield Court. They got conditional bail until July 26./At Bentley Colliery, S. Yorkshire coupling rods and metal weighing 60lb are sent crashing down on to the roof of the winding cage. A man is shot dead and another seriously wounded by police while they are trying to rob Ballygally post office, Co. Antrim./There have been 1,906 arrests between March 14 and May 10 connected with the miners' strike.

**MAY 16 1984:** 55 men, mostly miners aged 20-30 are due in court on charges of riot after Monday's rally in Mansfield./400 students barricade themselves in the North London polytechnic. A National Front news reporter is beaten up when NF militant Patrick Harrington arrives armed with a court injunction and police escort so that he can continue 'his studies' against the will of the rest of the students./Police have been raiding gay clubs in Soho daily over the past few days.

**MAY 18 1984:** Riot police escort Patrick Harrington into the Polytechnic, smashing through glass doors at the back to get in after 300 students block the doors. Fire extinguishers are turned on pickets and furniture is used as barricades./53 year old miner Joseph Pollard is killed, and another two are injured 1,000 feet underground when they are struck by a runaway truck at Whitwick Colliery, Coalville, Leicestershire.

**MAY 19 1984:** Miners' social security benefit is cut in an attempt to get them back to work. £15 strike pay (which they don't get) is already being deducted from social security payments. Now £4 is being taken off for food hampers received.

**MAY 20 1984:** John Bowden and James McCaig, aged 26 and 27, are found guilty and sentenced to 10 and 7 seven years at Winchester Crown Court for 'threatening to murder' Mr Gerry Schofield, assistant governor of Parkhurst jail, Isle of Wight, by holding him prisoner during a siege last year./Parents set up their own school in the mining village of Pantyfford, W Glamorgan, after being told bus fares would no longer be subsidised by the State school./50 year old miner Abraham Mbbat is recovering in hospital after nailing himself to the floor for 24 hours in protest against scabs.

**MAY 23 1984:** First meeting between Coal Board and NUM./BL

are to close their Bathgate plant, meaning there will be 1,800 more unemployed in the area./Justice Mac Dermott dismisses himself at Belfast Crown Court as he says police informer Ray Gilmour's statements cannot be backed up by admissible evidence./Part time office cleaner who needed money for his baby's funeral and was given £9 from social security, took £140 from his electric meter, then gave himself up to the police./45 LEB staff have been dismissed and 6 more resign for 'tampering with meters'. The national figure in this field is quoted at £40million.

**MAY 25 1984:** At the conference of the Justices' Clerks' Society in Blackpool it is proposed that court fines be deducted at source from social security payments.

**MAY 26 1984:** Workers sitting in at BL's threatened truck plant in Bathgate are warned that unless it is ended soon they will lose their redundancy money as BL will withdraw it unless production continues.

**MAY 28 1984:** 1,500 to 2,000 pickets at Orgreave Coking Plant in response to call for mass picket. Police operations were directed by Spt. John Nesbitt./13 miners arrested at Orgreave appear at Rotherham magistrates' court, 8 charged with public order offences, 3 with criminal damages and one with obstruction./Shirley Clark, Michael Heys, Adrian Jackson and Julie Edwards, four members of Sheffield Animal Rights group are charged with conspiracy at their second appearance at Wetherby Magistrates' Court to burn down a Leeds University laboratory./A Sheffield inquest decides it was industrial disease that killed retired miner Leslie Thomas of Bighton who was suffering from lung cancer. /Over 22 miners' support groups run by women have sprung up in Nottinghamshire./49 year old ex-miner Harold Sockett of Sheffield slashes his wrists to the bones and dies after the blood drips into a bucket at his bedside while his wife lies asleep.

**MAY 31 1984:** The entire stock of Leeds Polytechnic's computer equipment is stolen./500 cars full of flying pickets from Yorkshire are stopped by Nottinghamshire police (about 2,000 in all), and others on minor roads heading for Annesley and Bentsinch. Stop the City 200 demonstrators try to repeat past actions. Lack of numbers, police repression, meant little happened.

## ELEPHANT EDITIONS

Elephant Editions are preparing a series of anarchist paperbacks, the first of which will be in print this autumn. Our aim in the long term is to provide a series of instruments contributing to anarchist theory and action. Subjects will therefore include up-to-date analyses; accounts of past struggles seen in a critical light; theoretical elaborations ranging from anarchist aesthetics to self-management. Comrades interested in collaborating at the level of translating, copy reading, distribution, etc, should contact us at: B.M. Elephant, LONDON WC1V6XX



# LETTER FROM ORAZIO VALASTRO

Lyons  
July 24 1984

Dear comrades,

I want to inform you of certain events that have been taking place concerning myself and my companion, a police action attempting to tie us into a precise project of inquisition and repression concerning 'terrorism'.

On the 19th of this month three individuals, indisputably from the police, came to look for me at the house of friends where I was staying for a short period. This was in Eclassan, a small village in the Ardèche. Acting outside any 'democratic' legality whatsoever, they insisted on interrogating me, using violent methods to solicit replies on my 'political' activity, my relationships and links that I was supposed to have with *Action Directe* or the COLP.

In the face of my friends' protests, and to push their actions further, they took my identity papers, work permit, etc, from me, forced me into their car and drove to a solitary part of open countryside, continuing to threaten me as they had been doing the whole time they were questioning me.

In the countryside the situation degenerates: if I try to escape they are ready to put a bullet in me. I undergo further violence and death threats. At one point I believed they were about to fire the pistol that was being held against me if I did not consent to their proposals to work for them to help discover who it was who killed two policemen in Paris in the

summer of 1982. They were using a tape-recorder, and when I said they were trying to intimidate me in order to use me, one of the three said on tape that I would work for them.

At a certain point it seems they were satisfied enough with this terroristic practice to leave me at St Vallier railway station, giving me a ticket and 100 francs. Not knowing what had happened to my companion during this time, I phoned her from Lyons and was forced to speak to her in French. They continued to insist for a while on the 'wage' I desired, which was to take my companion and myself to Paris to infiltrate, thanks to my cover as 'anarchist militant', circles that would put them on the tracks of those who had killed their comrades. Five hours had passed by the time I sat on the train to Lyons.

There is mention in today's papers of links between *Action Directe* and the COLP, which have supposedly been forming over the past two years. It is no coincidence therefore that in their underground investigations the police are putting out feelers and trying to have a go at certain comrades active in the French anarchist and libertarian movement, and a number of reasons led them to me.

Being an immigrant with all the social difficulties that that entails, they have tried to blackmail me by leaving me without documents and under threat of death so as to force me to work for them. They obviously thought that such a socially fragile, therefore easily

impressionable subject under continual threats would passively submit to their game.

On July 23, they telephoned my companion at work to remind her of our 'pact' and to tell her they would be calling to pick us up shortly.

To try to put a brake on this action I made a declaration to the Public Prosecutor in Privas, the place in question, and also informed the Lyons tribunal.

This seems to have set things moving at the level of the judiciary and an inquest is in course, although it has not been officially opened. Of course I am not expecting this to lead to the punishment of the three outlaws as the inquest will never be completed, but through this very official channel I want to make it known to the mini try directing this affair that they can forget any further actions of the kind. The regional and national press have been informed but are keeping the information in reserve.

It is important for comrades to be aware of these events and to know that I do not participate with the named organisations in any way other than to demonstrate my solidarity against repression. Also that, taking on responsibilities with my participation in the revolutionary movement, I in no way accept ending up as a police informer, perhaps even more repulsive than any sincere or set-up *pentito*.

anarchist greetings,  
Orazio Valastro

## RE A COUPLE OF FOOLS AND A PIECE OF PAPER

It often happens in the international anarchist movement that duplicated or printed sheets—or should we say papers, because they bear a graphic resemblance to newspapers—are produced that are full of rubbish.

Being an anarchist doesn't prevent one from being stupid or a fool.

Usually in such cases, readers who use publications apply their own criteria of debate and reflection and quickly discard such rubbish for what it is. One gives a smile and that is the end of it.

Sometimes, however, we don't smile at fools. That happens when, putting aside confused ideas and theoretical rubbish, they turn their attention to individuals.

When they talk about other comrades, of what they are doing, what their activity represents, of projects that are under discussion, then these individuals become dangerous.

If for no other reason than that the most attentive reader of fools is precisely the police.

What to do?

Although—as a famous dictum tells us—one can defend oneself from the intelligent, the same does not apply to fools.

And that is the case. Possible defence against the damage caused by imbecility is little and inefficient.

One can explain to the fool the risk he is putting other comrades at with his 'carelessness', or with his not quite correct evaluation of events and things. But can we really be sure that the fool understands? And then, having convinced one fool (one way or another), who will defend us from the next hundred who take up their pens to mess up a piece of paper?

The only solution lies in setting out one's ideas as clearly as possible, exposing one's thought as clearly as possible, precisely so as to avoid 'bad' or 'ill-meaning' interpretations being able to find space and confuse comrades.

If comrade A is accused by fool X of having done a specific thing, there is no point in entering into an argument, pointing out that such a thing did not take place, and the reasons for its impossibility. One can clarify indirectly, reconfirming the thought and action of comrade A, as though the intervention of the fool X did not exist.

All this is valid of course in the case of finding oneself with proof of the fellow's imbecility. In the case of his being an informer, then behaviour *must* be different, and it is not necessary to go into what that should be here, because all comrades know very well what to do about it.

# THE CHURCH AND THE OBJECTIVE SPIRIT

In your article in Issue One on the 'gluten free wafer', you rightly underlined the anachronism of the catholic church's behaviour towards those of its members who are changing the composition of the sacred particle in which the body and blood of Christ consolidates and takes life.

The fact that this kind of idiocy still attracts the attention of the church leaders should not surprise us. In fact this organisation's whole power structure is based on the *objective spirit*, ie the material content of the symbol, independently of the decisions or will of the individual.

This has always been one of the strong points of catholic power. During mass, the divine service (transformation of bread and wine into the body of Christ) comes about automatically at the simple pronunciation of a few precise words by the priest (who himself has been permanently invested with certain powers by his superiors). In this way the hierarchical structure is assured in absolute. The subordinate sees in the superior one who possesses the secret of transforming reality, absolving sins, moulding character, etc, which has nothing to do with his own person or value as an individual.

This is how the widespread and terrible crimes committed by this organisation throughout its history can be

explained. From the atrocities of the inquisition to the deaths at the stake. From the support given to the forces of power everywhere (including the nazis), to financial swindles, speculation and accumulation of enormous wealth.

It is enough for the same person who handles millions through the vatican bank (IOR), has relations with Sindona's mafia organisation, and speculative swindles through the Banca Privata and the Franklin Bank, to raise his hands and repeat a few words for everyone to be sure that the mystery of the re-incarnation will take place without a doubt, and with no one being able to prevent it, even his superiors.

The strength of the catholic church lies precisely in this gigantic mechanism of absolute obedience to the *object*: the word, or ritual, or symbol. No one can put a brake on an objective process, not even the Pope himself. Think of the great power of persuasion such an idea has held for centuries.

Basically, people want some one to provide a mechanism that works, even against their own will, so long as it is objective and no opposing force can alter it. This reassures them allows them little deviations in behaviour but which can be put back on to the rails of eternal objectivity.

Any misdeed whatsoever can be justified in this way, as long as the

mechanism continues to work.

Until recently, the myth of the objective mechanism of exploitation leading to social liberation, was the pillar of the marxist church. Then it was noticed that this mechanism was continually being altered by capital, and that without the intervention of the exploited the thing could go on indefinitely. But that dream was used to cradle the proletarian's dreams and justify their behaviour at times accommodating or contradictory. One minute we are going to war, drawing up an agreement with the boss, working in an arms factory, accepting trade union protection—it doesn't matter, because the objective mechanism is functioning on its own and working for the revolution in place of us. This kind of reasoning is quite similar to that which people carry out concerning the objective myth of the catholic church.

Any call to personal responsibility, to criticism, investigation, reflection, is always unpleasant as it instills doubt into acquired certainties, awakens from lethargy, gives birth to fears and desires unknown till then.

But this, basically, is the work of revolutionaries: to destroy myths and illusions everywhere, including those within the religious tabernacles and party strongholds.

Lucy Fur



# INSURRECTION

ANARCHIST PAPER

ISSUE THREE

50 PENI





THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES...that of the miners, the unemployed, the low paid workers, immigrant workers, proletarian women, young people...the groups and sub-groups are endless in the great mass of the exploited of advanced capital.

The urban ghettos kindle, there is ferment in the schools. Anger is mounting among the services workers pushed out of their jobs or devalued by privatisation. Shipyard workers, workers in the car industry, skilled and unskilled workers in all the heavy and light industries are finding themselves thrown like rejects on to the scrap heaps of poverty and depression. Meanwhile the rich get richer. And to keep this wealth they are building more and more bunkers, bullet proof cars, training armies, special corps for crowd control, building new prisons, formulating new laws, tightening border controls, perfecting social control.

The obvious place to turn in this situation is the official workers' movement. This however has miserably failed in its historic task. There can no longer be any doubt. The unions need the space to survive and grow that only capital will provide for them. Even the seemingly combative ones have no intention or desire to destroy a system which is happy to delegate to them the role of bargaining over the cost of the restructuring process in course. Their role is indispensable, and is worth the price of policing picket line battles when workers are no longer prepared to accept the results of the conference table.

The only losers are those who fought and gave all—and lost all. What good is the credit balance of 'self-respect' if all it serves to do is to palliate another twenty years down the mines or a life on the dole.

The struggle continues, in spite of the unions. In spite of the parties and hangers on. In spite of the anarchists so long as we remain tied to illusions that our movement has fostered for so long now.

What to do? Wait for the next confrontation to appear? Improve next time, become insurrectionalists, trade unionists, abstentionists for the day, anti-militarists or whatever else the occasion demands of us?

Or is it time to work out—make known in clear terms—what anarchists really are. What we really want: to subvert the present order and be protagonists in the struggle for the new. This is not an abstract concept, a maximisation to delay the moment of action. If our final subversive, destructive, aim is forgotten for a moment, allowing ourselves to be fascinated by the pull of activism without clear thought and profound analysis, we can often end up flanking the very counter-revolution we believe we are fighting.

We need organisational proposals that become a clear point of reference beyond the institutionalised haggling of capitalist forces. These proposals must be concrete and we must be present to participate in bringing them about. It is time to come out from our ideological bunkers and confront each other not so much on the immediate and pressing tactical choices for the next demo, but to analyse the reality in which we are trying to work. It is time to come out.

# violence and non-violence

The problem of the difference between 'violence' and 'nonviolence' is usually posed wrongly because of the class interests and emotive reactions it triggers off.

State violence and the terrorism of the bosses knows no limits or moral obstacle. Revolutionaries, and anarchists in particular, are quite justified in responding to this violence with revolutionary violence.

Complications arise when we examine the positions of those who support non-violence. In appearance only do they choose peaceful methods, methods which when seen in isolation are not violent, ie do not physically attack the adversary. Yet when seen within the general framework of the struggle, their interventions (apart from those of organisations who use non violence as an alibi to leave things as they are) turn out to be just as violent as those carried out by the supporters of 'violence'.

A march of 'pacifist' demonstrators is itself a violent event which upsets the order of exploitation. It is a demonstration of strength, a show of force. It does not differ from the 'violent' demonstration, at least in its choice of objective. From the strategic and revolutionary point of view, the idea of a violent demonstration capable of winning and holding a military victory is unthinkable today. In so saying, we do not mean that we should refuse revolutionary violence. We only mean we must be clear so as to

avoid sanctifying the machine gun on the one hand or becoming the policeman of the situation on the other.

A purely verbal distinction between violence and non-violence is a false one. A well-fed bourgeois can easily 'theorise' the most unchained violence, against the boss class, but only with difficulty will he put it into effect in conditions requiring total dedication to the revolutionary task. Most often his violence is purely verbal. In practice he prefers things to remain as they are, because among other things, that allows him to continue to exercise his fiery rhetoric.

Another equally well-fed bourgeois might feel himself transported to an exaltation of non-violence, but still as something theoretical, something condemning the negative 'instincts' of struggle and violence and sanctifying the positive 'instincts' of peace and brotherhood. Only with difficulty however will this bourgeois put his non-violent 'principles' into practice in a total daily involvement in the social struggle. He will prefer the comfort of the situation as it is, where he can carry on with his reflections on peace and brotherhood.

Before speaking of violence and non-violence a distinction should be made as to whether the question is being applied to a real situation, or whether it is simply an abstract theory and there is no intention of actually applying it. Only in the case of the former is it possible to dis-

cuss the strategic and military conditions that render non-violent methods less effective and more easily overcome by power. But this discussion is one which comes afterwards, is a question of method and never an abstract one.

We are not interested in philosophical discussions on violence that lead to theories of the hereditary biological violence of the species, etc, which stink of theology. What is important is to approach the struggle in its reality. The rest is a question of choice of means and the best way to put them into effect.

If we are personally convinced that non-violent methods are unsuitable in the social struggle today, not for this are we against the comrades who see their own dimension of struggle in non-violent methods. What is important is that the struggle be engaged upon seriously, that it not be limited to speaking of 'non-violent struggle' as an alibi so that the police will leave us alone.

Abstract discussions on violence (nearly always fiery and bloody) and just as abstract discussions on nonviolence (nearly always idiotic and paradisaical) are equally disgusting. We can only respond effectively to the historic crime of exploitation, terrorism and institutionalised violence with struggle, using any means we choose. The violence (or non-violence) of words and speeches will change nothing.

## VICTORY? WHOSE

name but a few.

The same media that rekindles an abhorrence of the concentration camps, covers up the legacy of dismemberment, blindness, malformation, the slow and painful deaths of the 'good' wars.

In the spirit of the pioneers and frontiersmen, these wars were and are waged with a quick clean efficiency. No messing about, just bomb them off the face of the earth. Too bad that chemical reactions and radiation can achieve the whole thing in just the one radical obliteration but continue through succeeding generations (see agent orange). But with progress in science and chemical warfare, one day this might be possible.

In the same way, the old teutonic version of the fascism of the jackboot and the swastika has given way to the new, clean, sanitised fascism of social democracy. The fascism of participation and controlled dissent, on condition that real power is centralised in the hands of a restricted minority which coordinates political and economic power, making it balance. This minority is supra-national in character and structure (IMF, international

power summits, ecumenical church, multinational corporations) and uses 'international' wars as a stimulus to profit and social control. (And the monarchies are at the same time anachronistic figure-heads and active participants in the ongoing slaughter this fascism represents both in 'wars', at the workplace and in the famine-ridden deserts.)

We cannot detach what the State calls war from the global project of capitalist exploitation. Our task as anarchists is to demystify war, and underline what we all know very well: that we are living in a perpetual state of war, a war which has no frontier but class boundaries. Terrorism and genocide is not the prerogative of the military structure of one country, but is the underlying basis of everyday life.

Nothing to celebrate then, but time to organise and work out a real offensive in a libertarian class dimension whose objectives are always the same: an organised attack against the organisations and individuals who put into act and make possible exploitation in all its bellicose forms.

# ON AMNESTY

## More on Amnesty

There has been reference in some anarchist papers recently to the 'struggle for amnesty' taking place by prisoners in Italy. Even without knowing much of what has been happening there in recent years, it doesn't take much reflection to see there is a contradiction in terms here. A 'struggle' for amnesty is at best a contradiction, in its true light it is one of the latest swindles by the repressive apparatus of the Italian State, requiring the complicity of a large part of what was once its contestant (at least in its present form) both inside and outside the prison walls.

Hence the rivers of words, theories, justifications and platitudes, amounting to no more than a fairly generalised 'throwing in the towel'. 'The War is over', and the same laws that churned out life sentences and allowed for the release of vile traitors and grasses, are now sanctioning amnesty. The order is: continue the struggle with other means. The ones used till now have made too much noise. Abandon everything. Put aside the class struggle. Abandon the revolution.

First the appearance of the *pentiti* who abandoned the struggle on a military and political level, passing over to the side of the State and personally taking on the task of strangling all further forms of resistance resulting in the assassination of four Red Brigades comrades in Genova in 1980 and the arrest of hundreds of comrades since. Now the appearance of those affirming 'desertion'. In May 1980 a collective document drawn up by the supporters of the *desertion* thesis, nearly all ex-*Prima Linea*, among whom Donat Cattin and Gai, was published by *Lotta Continua*. This first group of deserters was short-lived. Many of them ended up with a very fine line between themselves and the *pentiti*, and almost all of them ended up collaborating with the judiciary.

In September 1982, a document appeared known as that of the 51 (the number of signatories) drawing up a way of taking a distance from the struggle; disassociation, proposals for pacification, amnesty, etc.

Those who signed this document, mainly from the autonomy area, maintain that combatant positions be condemned, opening the way to a dialectic with the State. Negri, Ferrari, Bravo, Vesce and others say it is necessary to criticise the past radical antagonism and immerse themselves in a dialectic relationship with the 'healthy' social and political forces. In this way (they maintain) the State will also find itself forced into self-criticism. New conditions of the political clash will lead not to radical dissent or total opposition, but to dialectic and increased discussion, with the aim of stimulating the State to increasingly democratise itself. In this way the area of *disassociation* has developed and contains various positions.

One of these positions is that of Scalzone and other refugees in France. They maintain there should be a great mobilisation to impose a battle for amnesty for all political prisoners. An armistice has to be drawn up with the State, and the two sides are to bargain over the price of the movement's defeat.

Another area born within the prisons is that of the so-called *decarcerisation* (release of prisoners). Its supporters refuse to subscribe to *disassociation*, but see the need to find other roads to social transformation, passing through pacifist and ecological struggles to a better 'quality of life'. In their situation as prisoners they want to begin a politico-cultural struggle aimed at reducing the negative effects of segregation. This area are calling for conferences, demonstrations, concerts, exhibitions, production and cultural coops, with the aim of creating social structures

that are 'alternatives to prison', in a perspective allowing a passage from the dreamed of political revolution to social transformation. This area is rapidly approaching that of the true *disassociated* and constitutes the so-called *homogeneous area*. They organised a conference in Rebibbia prison in Rome last May in which 30 prisoners participated. Many ex-militants of *Prima Linea* have taken a road leading to positions of disassociation. Instead of *pacification* they speak of *reconciliation*, concluding that conditions in Italy today do not consent the use of armed struggle.

The 'continuitist' nucleus of the Red Brigades (eg Curcio) are enclosed in an unreal irreducibility, insisting on the need for the constitution of the Combatant Communist Party. They have highlighted the limitations and defects of armed struggle and the organisation that have practised it over the past years. They say it is possible to use revolutionary violence but that it has not managed to unite all the expressions of the proletariat over the past years. A critique has been made of those who lived and still live the myth of the Red Brigades as monolithic armed vanguard. So the concept of the party in the third-internationalist sense has fallen, giving way to the conception of a guerrilla attacking proletarian contradictions from within. In December 1983 they began a hunger strike in the prison of Nuoro against prison conditions. They have since instored a relationship with the catholic church recognising it in the role of prisoners' defence.

There also exists, however, a considerable number of comrades who criticise political solutions. They support the need for taking up the struggle again, both inside and outside the prisons and seeing the problem of prison within the whole perspective of liberation from the capitalist system.

While the massacre continues in South Africa, the hangman Botha is trying to create a veneer of 'softening' the white bourgeois regime through the repeal of the laws on intermarriage between blacks and whites. A turning on to the road of superstructural reforms, leaving intact the basic structure of exploitation.

Another highlight of this 'democratisation' of the Botha regime has been the ultimatum proffered to Nelson Mandela, incarcerated in the dungeons of apartheid now for 22 years after being sentenced to life imprisonment for sabotage, to renounce the struggle along with other ANC (African National Congress) prisoners. So in terms of the South African government, Mandela 'has only himself to blame' for his continuing incarceration in the strongholds of capitalist domination and greed. He was offered his release 'on the condition that he renounce armed struggle'.

From his cell in Pollsmoor prison near Capetown he replied, broadcast and reported by the liberal media: "I am not a violent man...it was only when all other forms of resistance were no longer open to us that we turned to armed struggle. Let Botha renounce violence...let him say he will dismantle apartheid...let him unban the ANC...let him free all who have been imprisoned, banished or exiled for opposition to apartheid...I am not less life-loving than you are. But I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free..."

'What freedom am I being offered when I must ask for permission to live in an urban area? What freedom am I being offered when my very South African citizenship is not respected.'

'Only free men can negotiate... prisoners cannot enter into contract. I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free.' Nelson Mandela

## Neighbourhood WATCH

In Orlando, Florida, a pilot scheme using drivers from local businesses has been launched, developed by the Greater Orlando Crime Prevention Association. The so-called 'Mobile Watch' consists of volunteers trained as 'extra eyes and ears' of the police. Local company fleet drivers are trained by police to spot and report 'emergencies or suspicious criminal activity'. All reports are immediately relayed to police headquarters either directly or through company dispatchers.

This brings to mind a recent report from the communications research group in applied psychology at Aston University which dispelled the myth—held by both public and police—of the police as great solvers of 'crime'. In actual fact the police represent the *symbols* of effectiveness rather than provide the reality of it.

More than 85 per cent of the 'crimes' known to the police are solved by the public (still according to our worthy researchers), who provide most of the crucial information. Hence the great police drive in neighbourhoods, schools, etc, appealing to the policeman that beats in

everyman's heart, using the media inflation of acts of basic survival into an alarming crimewave to arouse public vigilance.

These schemes have been welcomed with enthusiasm in the middle class areas, the occupants of which spend their lives being cops in one way or another: filling in registers, report cards, log books and all the other records of exploitation. Not so in the proletarian ghettos, where the struggle for survival creates its own laws and its own code of practise.

In fact from these areas, especially among young black people, there is no mystification as to the role of the police and their schemes. Not only have they refused en masse to police their own people either formally or informally, they have also refused point blank to participate in ID parades. Hence the frequent presence of uniformed and plain clothes police at the top of the Brixton tube station escalator: anyone travelling up it at one of these moments risks being 'recognised' by a witness and feeling the icy grip of the handcuffs in the new public ID parade.





# PANNEKOEK ON TRADE UNIONISM



How must the working class fight capitalism in order to win? This is the all important question facing the workers every day. What efficient means of action, what tactics can they use to conquer power and defeat the enemy? No science, no theory, could tell them exactly what to do. But spontaneously and instinctively, by feeling out, by sensing the possibilities, they found their ways of action. And as capitalism grew and conquered the earth and increased its power, the power of the workers also increased. New modes of action, wider and more efficient, came up beside the old ones. It is evident that with changing conditions, the forms of action, the tactics of the class struggle have to change also. Trade unionism is the primary form of labour movement in fixed capitalism. The isolated worker is powerless against the capitalistic employer. To overcome this handicap, the workers organise into unions. The union binds workers together into common action, with the strike as their weapon. Then the balance of power is relatively equal, or is sometimes even heaviest on the side of the workers, so that the isolated small employer is weak against the mighty union. Hence in developed capitalism trade unions and employers unions (Associations, Trusts, Corporations, etc), stand as fighting powers against each other.

Trade unionism first arose in England, where industrial capitalism first developed. Afterward it spread to other countries, as a natural companion of capitalist industry. In the United States there were very special



conditions. In the beginning, the abundance of free unoccupied land, open to settlers, made for a shortage of workers in the towns and relatively high wages and good conditions. The American Federation of Labour became a power in the country, and generally was able to uphold a relatively high standard of living for the workers who were organised in its unions.

It is clear that under such conditions the idea of overthrowing capitalism could not for a moment arise in the minds of the workers. Capitalism offered them a sufficient and fairly secure living. They did not feel themselves a separate class whose interests were hostile to the existing order; they were part of it; they were conscious of partaking in all the possibilities of an ascending capitalism in a new continent. There was room for millions of people, coming mostly from Europe. For these increasing millions of farmers, a rapidly increasing industry was necessary, where, with energy and good luck, workmen could rise to become free artisans, small business men, even rich capitalists. It is natural that here a true capitalist spirit prevailed in the working class.

The same was the case in England. Here it was due to England's monopoly of world commerce and big industry, to the lack of competitors on foreign markets, and to the possession of rich colonies, which brought enormous wealth to England. The capitalist class had no need to fight for its profits and could allow the workers a reasonable living. Of course, at first, fighting was necessary to urge this truth upon them; but then they could allow unions and grant wages in exchange for industrial peace. So here also the working class was imbued with the capitalist spirit.

Now this is entirely in harmony with the innermost character of trade unionism. Trade unionism is an action of the workers, which does not go beyond the limit of capitalism. Its aim is not to replace capitalism by another form of production, but to secure good living conditions within capitalism. Its character is not revolutionary, but conservative.



Certainly, trade union action is class struggle. There is a class antagonism in capitalism—capitalists and workers have opposing interests. Not only on the question of conservation of capitalism, but also within capitalism itself, with regard to the division of the total product. The capitalists attempt to increase their profits, the surplus value, as much as possible, by cutting down wages and increasing the hours or the intensity of labour. On the other hand, the workers attempt to increase their wages and to shorten their hours of work.

The price of labour power is not a fixed quantity, though it must exceed a certain hunger minimum; and it is not paid by the capitalists of their own free will. Thus this antagonism becomes the object of a contest, the real class struggle. It is the task, the function of the trade unions to carry on this fight.

Trade unionism was the first training school in proletarian virtue, in solidarity as the spirit of organised fighting. It embodied the first form of proletarian organised fighting. In the early English and American trade unions this virtue often petrified and degenerated into a narrow craft-corporation, a true capitalistic state of mind. It was different, however, where the workers had to fight for their very existence, where the utmost efforts of their unions could hardly uphold their standard of living, where the full force of an energetic, fighting, and expanding capitalism attacked them. There they had to learn the wisdom that only the revolution could definitely save them.

So there comes a disparity between the working class and trade unionism. The working class has to look beyond capitalism. Trade unionism lives entirely within capitalism and cannot look beyond it. Trade unionism can only represent a part, a necessary but narrow part, in the class struggle. And it develops aspects which bring it into conflict with the greater aims of the working class.

With the growth of capitalism and big industry the unions too must grow. They become big corporations with thousands of members, extending over the whole country, with sections in every town and every factory. Officials must be appointed: presidents, secretaries, treasurers, to conduct the affairs, to manage the finances, locally and centrally. They are the leaders, who negotiate with the capitalists and who by this practice have acquired a special skill. The president of a union is a big shot, as big as the capitalist employer himself, and he discusses with him, on equal terms, the interests of his members.



The officials are specialists in trade union work, which the members, entirely occupied by their factory work cannot judge or direct themselves.

So large a corporation as a union is not simply an assembly of single workers; it becomes an organised body, like a living organism, with its own policy, its own character, its own mentality, its own traditions, its own functions. It is a body with its own interests, which are separate from the interests of the working class. It has a will to live and to fight for its existence. If it should come to pass that unions were no longer necessary for the workers, then they would not simply disappear. Their funds, their members, and their officials: all of these are realities that will not disappear at once, but continue their existence as elements of the organisation.

The union officials, the labour leaders, are the bearers of the special union interests. Originally workmen from the shop, they acquire, by long practice at the head of the organisation, a new social character. In each social group, once it is big enough to form a special group, the nature of its work moulds and determines its social character, its mode of thinking and acting. The officials' function is entirely different from that of the workers. They do not work in factories, they are not exploited by capitalists, their existence is not threatened continually by unemployment. They sit in offices, in fairly secure positions. They have to manage corporation affairs and to speak at workers' meetings and discuss with employers. Of course they have to stand for the workers, and to defend their interests and wishes against the capitalists. This is, however, not very different from the position of the lawyer who, appointed secretary of an organisation, will stand for its members and defend their interests to the full of his capacity.

However, there is a difference. Because many of the labour leaders came from the ranks of workers, they have experienced for themselves what wage slavery and exploitation means. They feel as members of the working class and the proletarian spirit often acts as a strong tradition in them. But the new reality of their life continually tends to weaken this tradition. Economically they are not proletarians any more. They sit in conferences with the capitalists, bargaining over wages and hours, pitting interests against interests, just as the opposing





interests of the capitalist corporations are weighed one against another. They learn to understand the capitalist's position just as well as the worker's position; they have an eye for 'the needs of industry'; they try to mediate. Personal exceptions occur, of course, but as a rule they cannot have that elementary class feeling of the workers, who do not understand and weigh capitalist interests against their own, but will fight for their proper interests. Thus they get into conflict with the workers.;

The labour leaders in advanced capitalism are numerous enough to form a special group or class with a special class character and interests. As representatives and leaders of the unions they embody the character and the interests of the unions. The unions are necessary elements of capitalism, so the leaders feel necessary too, as useful citizens in capitalist society. The capitalist function of unions is to regulate class conflicts and to secure industrial peace. So labour leaders see it as their duty as citizens to work for industrial peace and mediate in conflicts. The test of the union lies entirely within capitalism; so labour leaders do not look beyond it. The instinct of self-preservation, the will of the unions to live and fight for existence, is embodied in the will of the labour leaders to fight for the existence of the unions. Their own existence is indissolubly connected with the existence of the unions. This is not meant in a petty sense, that they only think of their personal jobs when fighting for the unions. It means that primary necessities of life and social functions determine opinions. Their whole life is concentrated in the unions, only here have they a task. So the most necessary organ of society, the only source of security and power is to them the unions; hence they must be preserved and defended by all possible means, even when the realities of capitalist society undermine this position. This happens when capitalism's expansion class conflicts become sharper.

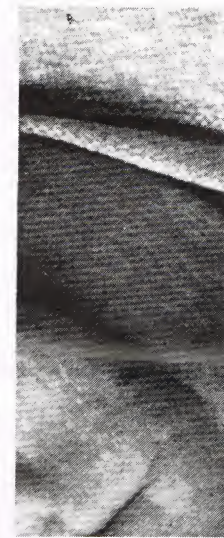
The concentration of capital in powerful concerns and their connection with big finance renders the position of the capitalist employers much stronger than the workers'. Powerful industrial magnates reign as monarchs over large masses of workers; they keep them in absolute subjection and do not allow 'their' men to go into unions. Now and then the heavily exploited wage slaves break out in revolt, in a big strike. They hope to enforce better terms, shorter hours, more humane conditions, the right to organise. Union organisers come to aid them. But then the capitalist masters use their social and political power. The strikers are driven from their homes; they are shot by militia or hired thugs; their spokesmen are railroaded into jail; their relief actions are prohibited by court injunctions. The



capitalist press denounces their cause as disorder, murder and revolution; public opinion is aroused against them. Then, after months of standing firm and of heroic suffering, exhausted by misery and disappointment, unable to make a dent on the ironclad capitalist structure, they have to submit and to postpone their claims to more opportune times.

In the trades where unions exist as mighty organisations, their position is weakened by this same concentration of capital. The large funds they had collected for strike support are insignificant in comparison to the money power of their adversaries. A couple of lock-outs may completely drain them. No matter how hard the capitalist employer presses upon the worker by cutting wages and intensifying their hours of labour, the union cannot wage a fight. When contracts have to be renewed, the union feels itself the weaker party. It has to accept the bad terms the capitalists offer; no skill in bargaining avails. But now the trouble with the rank and file members begins. The men want to fight; they will not submit before they have fought; and they have not much to lose by fighting. The leaders, however, have much to lose—the financial power of the union, perhaps its existence. They try to avoid the fight, which they consider hopeless. They have to convince the men that it is better to come to terms. So, in the final analysis, they must act as spokesmen of the employers to force the capitalists' terms upon the workers. It is even worse when the workers insist on fighting in opposition to the decision of the unions. Then the union's power must be used as a weapon to subdue the workers.

So the labour leader has become the slave of his capitalistic task of securing industrial peace—now at the cost of the workers, though he meant to serve them as best he could. He cannot look beyond capitalism, and with in the horizon of capitalism with a capitalist outlook, he is right when he thinks that fighting is of no use. To



criticise him can only mean that trade unionism stands here at the limit of its power.

Is there another way out then? Could the workers win anything by fighting? Probably they will lose the immediate issue of the fight; but they will gain something else. By not submitting without having fought, they rouse the spirit of revolt against capitalism. They proclaim a new issue.

But here the whole working class must join in. To the whole class, all their fellow workers, they must show that in capitalism there is no future for them, and that only by fighting, not as a trade union, but as a united class, they can win. This means the beginning of a revolutionary struggle. And when their fellow workers understand this lesson, when simultaneous strikes break out in other trades, when a wave of rebellion goes over the country, then in the arrogant hearts of the capitalists there may appear some doubt as to their omnipotence and some willingness to make concessions.

The trade union leader does not understand this point of view, because trade unionism cannot reach beyond capitalism. He opposes this kind of fight. Fighting capitalism in this way means at the same time rebellion against the trade unions. The labour leader stands beside the capitalist in their common fear of the workers' rebellion.

When the trade unions fought against the capitalist class for better working conditions, the capitalist class hated them, but it had not the power to destroy them completely. If the trade unions would try to raise all the forces of the working class in their fight, the capitalist class would persecute them with all its means. They may see their actions repressed as rebellion, their offices destroyed by militia, their leaders thrown in jail and fined, their funds confiscated. On the other hand, if they keep their members from fighting, the capitalist class may consider them as valuable institutions, to be preserved and protected, and their leaders as deserving citizens. So the trade unions find themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea; on the one side persecution, which is a tough thing to bear for people who meant to be peaceful citizens; on the other side, the rebellion of the members, which may undermine the unions. The capitalist class, if it is wise, will



recognise that a bit of sham fighting must be allowed to uphold the influence of the labour leaders over the members.

The conflicts arising here are not anyone's fault; they are an inevitable consequence of capitalist development. Capitalism exists, but it is at the same time on the way to ruin. It must be fought as a living thing, and at the same time, as a transitory thing. The workers must wage a steady fight for wages and working conditions, while at the same time communistic ideas, more or less clear and conscious, awaken in their minds. They cling to the unions, feeling that these are still necessary, trying now and then to transform them into better fighting institutions. But the spirit of trade unionism, which is in its pure form a capitalist spirit, is not in the workers. The divergence between these two tendencies in capitalism and in the class struggle appears now as a rift between the trade union spirit, mainly embodied in their leaders, and the growing revolutionary feeling of the members. This rift becomes apparent in the opposite positions they take on various important social and political questions.

Trade unionism is bound to capitalism; it has its best chances to obtain good wages when capitalism flourishes. So in times of depression it must hope that prosperity will be restored, and it must try to further it. To the workers as a class, the prosperity of capitalism is not at all important. When it is weakened by crisis or depression, they have the best chance to attack it, to strengthen the forces of the revolution, and to take the first steps toward freedom.

Capitalism extends its dominion over foreign continents, seizing their natural treasures in order to make big profits. It conquers colonies, subju-





gates the primitive population and exploits them, often with horrible cruelties. The working class denounces colonial exploitation and opposes it, but trade unionism often supports colonial politics as a way to capitalist prosperity.

With the enormous increases of capital in modern times, colonies and foreign countries are being used as places in which to invest large sums of capital. They become valuable possessions as markets for big industry and as producers of raw materials. A race for getting colonies, a fierce conflict of interests over the dividing up of the world arises between the great capitalist States. In these politics of imperialism the middle classes are whirled along in a common exaltation of national greatness. Then the trade unions side with the master class, because they consider the prosperity of their own national capitalism to be dependent on its success in the imperialist struggle. For the working class, imperialism means increasing power and brutality of their exploiters. These conflicts of interests between the national capitalisms explode into wars. World war is the crowning of the policy of imperialism. For the workers, war is not only the destruction of all their feelings of international brotherhood, it also means the most violent exploitation of their class for capitalist profit. The working class, as the most numerous and the most oppressed class of society, has to bear all the horrors of war. The workers have to give not only their labour power, but also their health and their lives.

Trade unions, however, in war must stand upon the side of the capitalist. Its interests are bound up with national capitalism, the victory of which it must wish with all its heart. Hence it assists in arousing strong national feelings and national hatred. It helps the capitalist class to drive the workers into war and to beat down all opposition.

Trade unionism abhors communism. Communism takes away the very basis of its existence. In communism, in the absence of capitalist employers, there is no room for the trade union and labour leaders. It is true that in countries with a strong socialist movement, where the bulk of the workers are socialists, the labour leaders must be socialists too, by origin as well as by environment. But then they are right-wing socialists; and their socialism is restricted to the idea of a commonwealth where instead of greedy capitalists honest labour leaders will manage industrial production.

Trade unionism hates revolution. Revolution upsets all the ordinary relations between capitalists and workers. In its violent clashings, all those careful tariff regulations are swept away; in the strife of its gigantic forces



the modest skill of the bargaining labour leaders loses its value. With all its power, trade unionism opposes the ideas of revolution and communism.

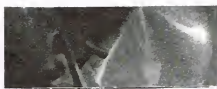
This opposition is not without significance. Trade unionism is a power in itself. It has considerable funds at its disposal, as material element of power. It has its spiritual influence, upheld and propagated by its periodical papers as mental element of power. It is a power in the hands of leaders, who make use of it wherever the special interests of trade unions come into conflict with the revolutionary interests of the working class. Trade unionism, though built up by the workers and consisting of workers, has turned into a power over and above the workers, just as government is a power over and above the people.

The forms of trade unionism are different for different countries, owing to the different forms of development in capitalism. Nor do they always remain the same in every country. When they seem to be slowly dying away, the fighting spirit of the workers is sometimes able to transform them, or to build up new types of unionism. Thus in England, in the years 1880-90, the 'new unionism' sprang up from the masses of poor dockers and the other badly paid, unskilled workers, bringing a new spirit into the old craft unions. It is a consequence of capitalist development, that in founding new industries and in replacing skilled labour by machine power, it accumulates large bodies of unskilled workers, living in the worst of conditions. Forced at last into a wave of rebellion, into big strikes, they find the way to unity and class consciousness. They mould unionism into a new form, adapted to a more highly developed capitalism. Of course, when afterwards capitalism grows to still mightier forms, the new unionism cannot escape the fate of all unionism, and then it produces the same inner contradictions.

The most notable form sprang up in America, in the 'Industrial Workers of the World'. The IWW originated from two forms of capitalist expansion. In the enormous forests and plains of the West, capitalism reaped the natural riches by Wild West methods of fierce and brutal exploitation; and the worker/adventurers responded with as wild and jealous a defence. And in the eastern states new industries were founded upon the exploitation of millions of poor immigrants, coming from countries with a low standard of living and now subjected to sweatshop labour or other most miserable working conditions.

Against the narrow craft spirit of the old unionism, of the AF of L, which divided the workers of one industrial plant into a number of separate unions, the IWW put the principle: all workers of one factory, as comrades against one master, must form one union, to act as a strong unity against the employer. Against the multitude of often jealous and bickering trade unions, the IWW raised the slogan: one big union for all the workers. The fight of one group is the cause of all. Solidarity extends over the entire class.

Contrary to the haughty disdain of the well-paid old American skilled labour towards the unorganised immigrants, it



was these worst-paid proletarians that the IWW led into the fight. They were too poor to pay high fees and build up ordinary trade unions. But when they broke out and revolted in big strikes, it was the IWW who taught them how to fight, who raised relief funds all over the country, and who defended their cause in its papers and before the courts. By a glorious series of big battles it infused the spirit of organisation and self-reliance into the hearts of these masses. Contrary to the trust in the big funds of the old unions, the Industrial Workers put their confidence in the living solidarity and the force of endurance, upheld by a burning enthusiasm. Instead of the heavy stone-masoned buildings of the old unions, they represented the principle of flexible construction, with a fluctuating membership, contracting in time of peace, swelling and growing in the fight itself. Contrary to the conservative capitalist spirit of trade unionism, the Industrial Workers were anti-capitalist and stood for Revolution. Therefore they were persecuted with intense hatred by the whole capitalist world. They were thrown into jail and tortured on false accusations; a new crime was even invented on their behalf: that of 'criminal syndicalism'.

Industrial unionism alone as a method of fighting the capitalist class is not sufficient to overthrow capitalist society and to conquer the world for the working class. It fights the capitalists as employers on the economic field of production, but it has not the means to overthrow their political stronghold, the State power. Nevertheless, the IWW so far has been the most revolutionary organisation in America. More than any other it contributed to rouse class consciousness and insight, solidarity and unity in the working class, to turn its eyes towards communism, and to prepare its fighting power.

The lesson of all these fights is that against big capitalism, trade unionism cannot win. And if at times it wins, such victories give only temporary relief. And yet, these fights are necessary and must be fought. To the bitter end?—no, to the better end.

The reason is obvious. An isolated group of workers might be equal to a fight against an isolated capitalist employer. But an isolated group of workers against an employer backed by the whole capitalist class is powerless. And such is the case here: the State power, the money power of capitalism, public opinion of the middle class, excited by the capitalist press, all attack the group of fighting workers.

But does the working class back the strikers? The millions of other workers do not consider this fight as their own cause. Certainly they sympathise, and may often collect money for the strikers, and this may give some relief, provided its distribution is not forbidden by a judge's injunction. But this easy-going sympathy leaves the real fight to the striking group alone. The millions stand aloof, passive. So the fight cannot be won (except in some special cases, when the capitalists, for business reasons, prefer to grant concessions), because the working class does not fight as one undivided unit.

The matter will be different, of course, when the mass of workers really consider such a contest as directly concerning them; when they find that their own future is at stake. If



they go into the fight themselves and extend the strike to other factories, to ever more branches of industry, then the State power, the capitalist power, has to be divided and cannot be used entirely against the separate group of workers. It has to face the collective power of the working class.

Extension of the strike, ever more widely, into, finally, a general strike, has often been advised as a means to avert defeat. But to be sure, this is not to be taken as a truly expedient pattern, accidentally hit upon, and ensuring victory. If such were the case, trade unions certainly would have made use of it repeatedly as regular tactics. It cannot be proclaimed at will by union leaders, as a simple tactical measure. It must come forth from the deepest feelings of the masses, as the expression of their spontaneous initiative, and this is aroused only when the issue of the fight is or grows larger than a simple wage contest of one group. Only then will the workers put all their force, their enthusiasm, their solidarity, their power of endurance into it.

And all these forces they will need. For capitalism also will bring into the field stronger forces than before. It may have been defeated and taken by surprise by the unexpected exhibition of proletarian force and thus have made concessions. But then, afterwards, it will gather new forces out of the deepest roots of its power and proceed to win back its position. So the victory of the workers is neither lasting nor certain. There is no clear open road to victory; the road itself must be hewn and built through the capitalist jungle at the cost of immense efforts.

But even so, it will mean great progress. A wave of solidarity has gone through the masses, they have felt the immense power of class unity, their self-confidence is raised, they have shaken off the narrow group egotism. Through their own deeds they have acquired new wisdom: what capitalism means and how they stand as a class against the capitalist class. They have seen a glimpse of their way to freedom.

Thus the narrow field of trade union struggle widens into the broad field of class struggle. But now the workers themselves must change. They have to take a wider view of the world. From their trade, from their work within the factory walls, their mind must widen to encompass society as a whole. Their spirit must rise above the petty things around them. They have to face the State; they enter the realm of politics. The problems of revolution must be dealt with.

# THE MINERS STRIKE AT CARMAUX

I had carefully followed the events at Carmaux. The first news of the strike had filled me with joy; the miners seemed to want to have nothing more to do with those useless, peaceful strikes where the worker patiently waits for the time when his few francs triumph over the companies' millions.

They seemed to have entered upon the path of violence as was finally shown on 15th August 1892.

The offices and buildings of the mine were invaded by a crowd who were tired of suffering without taking revenge; justice was coming to the engineer, so despised by his workers, when the faint-hearted intervened.

Who were these people?

The very same ones who wreck all revolutionary movements, because they fear that once underway they will no longer be obeyed, these people who force thousands of men to endure hardship for months on end, so that they can then make a big noise about their sufferings and create for themselves a popularity allowing them to claim a mandate—these men indeed assumed the leadership of the strike movement.

Suddenly a crowd of grandiloquent gentlemen appeared in the region who put themselves at the disposal of the strike, organised subscriptions, set up meetings, and appealed for funds from all sides. The miners placed all initiative in their hands. What happened then is now history.

The strike dragged on. Their hunger, from which they were never free, became even greater; they used the union's small reserve funds to buy food, as well as the money given by supporting organisations, then, after two months they returned to

the pits crestfallen and more wretched than before.

It would have been so easy from the beginning to attack the company's sole weak point—money; burn the stocks of coal, break up the mining equipment, and demolish the drainage pumps.

There is no doubt the company would have very soon given way. But the great pontiffs of socialism are not ones for such methods because they are anarchist methods. If you play this game you run the risk of prison and, who knows, perhaps one of those bullets which worked such wonders at Fourmies. And there will be no seats on municipal councils or legislatures.

In short, after a momentary disturbance, order reigned once more at Carmaux.

The company, more powerful than ever, continued its exploitation and the shareholders congratulated themselves on the happy outcome of the strike. After all, there were still dividends to reap.

It was because of this that I decided to add my own voice to that happy chorus, one that the bourgeoisie had already heard but they thought had died with Ravachol: the voice of dynamite.

I wanted to show the bourgeoisie that from that time on there would be an end to their joy, their insolent triumphs would be disturbed, and their golden calf would tremble violently on its pedestal until the final push casts it down into the blood and the filth.

At the same time I wanted to show the miners that there is only one group of men, the anarchists, who genuinely feel and understand their suffering and are ready to avenge them.

This is part of Emile Henri's speech to the jury during his trial in April 1894 where he was accused, among other things, of leaving a bomb inside the door of 11 avenue de l'Opera, at the offices of the Carmaux mine company. The bomb was discovered and taken to the police headquarters nearby where it exploded killing four policemen and a Carmaux messenger.



## VEGETARIAN OR VEGETATE?

Among the many schemas to which the movement of opposition has become a slave, one of the most diffused is that of vegetarianism.

To eat meat has become one of the ideologically unsound crimes against ...what? Against whom? On cashing their dole cheques young comrades resist the temptation to buy a pork pie or a sausage roll to return to the fold and devoutly ingest lentils, brown rice and organically grown vegetables (in order to avoid the toxins of DDT or to prevent a further massacre of slugs, greenfly or others of the more humble species of the animal kingdom?). So who defines what is an animal and what is not? Does it have a brain? Does it feel? Must it have big brown eyes, or can it have the creepy feelers of the spider or the slimyness of the worm? Where do we start? And hasn't it been proved beyond doubt that plants, ie carrots, cabbages, potatoes (or are they simply the 'lower echelons' of the plant kingdom, leaving the way to the super-race of trees and ornamental plants?), also scream at the assassin's knife. Aren't they too at the mercy of we Humans, masters (for the meantime) of the universe?

Do we discard our much-loved leather jackets and studded boots in favour of synthetic plastics fabricated at the cost of thousands of human lives on the oil rigs, petrol refineries, the polluted ghettos in the shanty towns of industrial waste? And doesn't the soap so diligently applied to hold up our crests come from whale's blubber?

As we can see, to continue in this vein leads us to the logic of the medieval theologians arguing about how many angels can be balanced on the end of a

needle. And how many of the classless angels of the ecology movement know that Hitler too was a devout vegetarian? Not only Hitler, but the whole of the pre-Nazi commune movement of the time?

Today the new 'clean' nazis, the so-called strasserites, are among the protagonists of the great ecological swindle.

The ecology movement has become a murky reservoir for a cohabitation of monarchists, monarchs (isn't Prince Charles himself officially a vegetarian?), fascists, secret services, pacifists and punks.

And before it be said that the present writer is trying to impose world-wide carnivorousness, let us hasten to say that in our opinion there is no one facet of social activity that can be separated from the rest and followed to an ultimate ideal to the exclusion of everything else. This is a certain road to interclassism, whether it be that of vegetarianism, feminism, pacifism, alleviating starvation or any other causes so fashionable today.

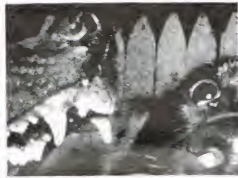
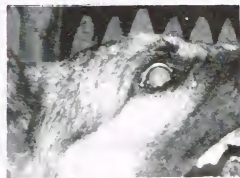
The horrors of forced farming and the slaughter of baby seals are but one tiny part of the result of capital's total negation of individual responsibility and feeling in every sphere of life on and beyond this planet. Equally, the reality of each horror cannot be put aside to wait for better times. We must act now in the single aspects of the general plan of exploitation, but using means that unite us in the totality of revolutionary struggle: those of attacking the common enemy. This will immediately distinguish us from the forces of moral indignation and reform—power structures such as the church the neo-church, and the State in all its forms—whose only aim is to change everything in order for everything to stay the same.





# ANARCHISM AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

translated from IRL journal d'expressions libertaires - 51



One thing that strikes us from the beginning is the almost total absence of movements or individuals who refer to anarchism in 'third world' countries. This (sad) fact leads to a number of consequences. Judging things from the outside, libertarians have difficulty in appreciating the conflicts that are tearing the world apart.

Lack of information, difficulty in putting aside western ideas to make room for others, activities carried out in their own countries, etc... does not motivate them to concern themselves with struggles far removed from their habitual point of view. All the more so as the content of these struggles does not favour unreserved adhesion.

Quite on the contrary: the affirmation of a national identity evaluates one people or ethnic group and develops xenophobic feelings towards 'foreigners'. Carriers of a Statist project, national liberation movements try to replace one nationalism with another, one power with another.

In the great nationalist family all the political tendencies cohabit, and the composition of the 'Fronts' seems quite ambiguous.

Anarchists therefore have a tendency to put coloniser and colonised alongside each other. Fearing they might compromise themselves in a combat whose objectives turn out to be contrary to their ideas, they prefer to keep prudently out of the way. But this attitude traps them.

First of all it leaves the field open to marxism. The social and insurrectional movements which have been exploding for dozens of years in the world have passed by libertarians (apart from a few exceptions such as the support given by some to the Algerian struggle during the war of independence). In this way their project for society seems to address itself to the west alone, and the socialist model becomes the only possible alternative in the eyes of the oppressed, where-

as it has largely proved its failure.

Next, by refusing to take a position among the various protagonists, anarchists comfort the position of the imperialist aggressor. In assuring no international support to its victims, they contribute to continuing the established system of exploitation. Any reference to nationalism provokes among a number of them a kind of 'mental block', making them lose sight of the reality of colonialism.

In the name of this reality and in view of historical experience, it is time to ask oneself whether the anarchist idea would not benefit by being otherwise defended. Its credibility depends on it. Because to abandon the field of struggle—on the pretext of conserving ideological purity—by considering the national liberation movement should be condemned as a whole is in no way constructive.

A nationalist current is a sum of complex and ambiguous interests. It serves as a trampoline for the representatives of the future dominant class who, by overcoming colonial power wish to satisfy their own ambitions. But it also represents a way for the colonised people to escape from their miserable situation and freeing themselves.

Nationalism rests on the sentiment of belonging, on a whole cultural and linguistic set of values shared by a community. Oppressed countries oppose these values to those of the oppressor, affirming their differences, claiming the right to master their own destiny. Libertarians, for their part, refuse a levelling of cultures. They attach value to the differences between peoples—because that is their wealth—and defend the federalist idea. They cannot therefore ignore the aspirations of a colonised people to have its cultural identity recognised.

Moreover, certain ideas released during the struggle are open to meeting their adhesion. Thus the self-managing experiences developed just after the independence of Algeria by numerous agricultural

workers took on a logic closer to the anarchist one than that of the national liberation front.

It is obviously not a question of anarchists defending any nationalist struggle under the pretext that it is a response to external aggression. It is more a question of examining the content of the nationalist claims of the proposed programme to replace the existing one, to decipher the (eventual) revolutionary aspects. This with the aim of giving critical—and not unconditional—support to the exploited, according to their defined objectives.

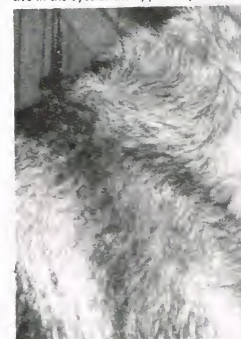
Actions of anarchists in favour of the colonised country can take place at various levels: —By placing the class struggle within the combat against imperialism. In other words, by insisting in the aggressing countries on the idea that proletarians of the aggressing countries are not imperialists even if, objectively speaking, they are playing the game of the imperialist State and the capitalists (when they make arms to be used against the oppressed peoples, for example). —By making an effort to establish relations between the oppressed classes of the imperialist and colonised countries. To do that anarchists must struggle against the 'nationalism' of the working class in the western States, ie, against their adhesion to a nationalistic ideology ('build British' and other such slogans of the unions and so-called communist parties), and try to develop internationalist sentiments among them. In fact, the exploiting classes of the colonising and colonised country are apparently far more internationalist than the exploited classes. (That is in both their interests, but the former perceive it far better than then the latter: the multinationals, the world arms market show that clearly). Relations between bourgeoisies of the oppressed and oppressing States in fact become conflictual when their interests begin to contradict each other at a certain point in economic

development. The former realise that only taking power will satisfy their ambitions.

On the contrary, relations between the oppressed in the exploiting country and that of the exploited are not conflictual but, blinded by State propaganda, they are hardly aware of it. —By attacking the aggressing States to demolish their ideology. In the case of Israel, for example, anarchists must criticise the State as a State, but also denounce the Zionist ideology which supports it; the imperialism of a fascist power such as South Africa. One must show them that all States can contain aspects of fascism.

Fascism is an aberration of the State and can appear as soon as the directors feel the need for it. Moreover, to go to the aid of the Palestinian people does not mean to support the OLP, partisan of the creation of a Palestinian State.

In fact it often seems difficult to do anything to advance a national liberation struggle from the outside without leading or giving lessons. But to interrogate oneself on the possibility of assuring solidarity can provoke reflection. Carrier of many different contents according to the individuals and groupings who make reference to nationalism, the struggle for national liberation has itself a purely negative value: that of bringing exploitation to an end. On the contrary, when based on the evaluation of an ethnic group, on a people as opposed to the 'foreigner', it can, once in power, develop a mystique that tends to obliterate class differences and serves to transform the exploited into exploiters. It is time anarchists made themselves heard. Critical support is one way to stop the creation of a State, of countering the totalitarian ideologies vehicled by the dominant nationalism. It can carry an anti-authoritarian message to colonised countries and show that the anarchist project also concerns them.



# IN TIMES OF DANGER HALF WAY MEASURES LEAD TO CERTAIN DEATH

## Revolutionary Cells

The peace movement, both in its composition and structure, has always wavered between radicalisation and accommodation. It has now reached a decisive point.

In recent years there have been minority groups within the peace movement who have tried to prevent forms of action degenerating into a statist adaptation, obstinately defending autonomous areas of intervention. The counter-demonstrators of Krefeld; the women of Hunsrück who entered and occupied military territory; the various peace initiatives aimed towards carrying out blockades that are not simply symbolic and amusing, but which seriously aim at preventing preparations for war; all seemed to point to a radicalisation of the movement, with the relative possibility of attacking the system without being blinded by the fear of war, and seeing instead the nuclear threat as the ultimate consequence of imperialism's strategies of exploitation and oppression. The struggle against 'rearmament' really seemed keen to activate and become a way of contesting the very roots and legitimacy of the system, as well as a point of reference and common cause for the various disconnected movements: social, ecological, feminist, etc., contributing to unifying and strengthening them.

But this was a vain hope. Instead of clarifying and demonstrating the interdependence of 'rearmament' crises; poverty in the 'third world' and reduction in public spending; sexism and racism, etc., and building new fronts on all those demarcation lines, exactly the opposite took place. Individuals came forward from every social sphere and united and organised against the 'primary danger'.

That does not detract from the fact that many have had individual experiences in the contesting of nuclear installations, which nothing and no one can take away from them. These experiences were fundamental, not only to their relationship with power, its arrogance and violence, but also for themselves, their own social role and relations between themselves. A potential for resistance the significance of which will only be put to the test in the future, was developed on the fringe of the movement. For the time being the Home Minister is publicly trying to ensure that the militant nuclei within the peace movement do not evolve to the point of becoming the 'new terrorist generation'. This would be a result of an imperfect stationalisation of the movement, and its not yet complete recuperation.

### The overwhelming need for harmony

We must admit, however, that the part of the peace movement that theorised and attacked the relationship between 'rearmament' and 'imperialism' remained a minority. Most of the movement has never wanted to hear of this. On the contrary, class struggle analyses are determined by a hypocritical moral dualism that denies the difference between above and below, and only recognises a difference between 'good' and 'bad'. Once again the ideal is pacific man. A dangerous ideal, which sees class contradictions as the product of behavioural anomalies, and tries to resolve everything through 'moral regeneration', giving up in the face of material conditions. In this way peace can be nothing more than a consequence of a massified 'personal' disarmament and of moral 'rearmament', never the possible product of a development of a struggle to annihilate the conditions of oppression and exploitation. And so we come to the

well-worn argument of the need to find harmony in oneself before giving any credibility to the cause of peace. The significance of all that is clear: to join hands to prevent them clenching their fists.

This religious and moral concept of the world implies that engagement for peace excludes struggle, because it is the struggle itself that we are uniting against. The peace movement does not want to expose contradictions and face them, but tends to completely compartmentalise them. It is looking for oases of tranquility in a world of strident contradictions. The peace community is not only a support structure concerning the nuclear threat, it is also trying to give a positive vision of the world which is anything but wholesome, and which in fact is decaying. Perhaps it is this overwhelming need for harmony that explains the almost inconceivable combination of manifest fear and contemplative serenity that we find in peace demonstrations. Perhaps this is the origin of the obvious discrepancy between their dramatic scenes representing the consequences of a nuclear war and their innocuous forms of action. The gestures of submission, spirit of sacrifice, sophisticated religiosity, visionary commitment, the vacuous expression and the superficiality that permeates the peace demonstrations, all go to show that the peaceful struggle against missiles is used above all for internal pacification, serving to defuse that 'time bomb' that every heart could be.

### Conspiracy of fear

The mad, boundless increase in fear is the application of a method, the result of a cold calculation by power. It is a weapon. Given that imperialism is not able to prevent an anti-war movement, it uses every means to channel this in its favour and convert the legitimate fear of war into a mass psychosis capable of being mobilised in its own interests, ie those of perpetuating power.

Having said that, we do not want to say that fear of nuclear rearmament is unfounded, only that the related paranoia is a project of power—a project that should be denounced as a manipulatory act.

It is therefore necessary to denounce any attempt whatsoever to create and maintain an atmosphere of catastrophe. Under the veil of the threat of destruction the foundations are laid for the project of 'change'—of the management of power. The 'welfare State' is undone and a new politics of pauperisation, persecution and elimination is developed. The strategists of the crisis pass off its consequences as the lesser of two evils, a necessary sacrifice to prevent a fear of greater catastrophe. The utopia of a free society comes to be given the value of a political moral whose only declared value is the survival of humanity.

The attempt to foment an apocalyptic atmosphere through propaganda in order to inculcate a sense of total impotence into the individual should be denounced. In the struggle against the bosses other 'solutions' no longer seem possible. One convinces oneself it is necessary to 'unite' with them, the crushing threat becoming the basis of legitimacy for the actions of the imperialist State.

Finally, all attempts to use that mixture of sentiment and doom, abstractly devoid of any social point of reference which is typical of the peace movement, are made to create a situation of sub-

mission, a training for non-violence and consensus. In this sense some groups who set themselves up as promoters are not as innocuous as they might seem.

### 'No more civil war'

The organised areas of the peace movement have shown how easy it is to transform this wide feeling of threat, mobilising it against the 'disrupters' (who are explicitly pointed out as such) in their reaction against those practising direct action in small groups. The impetus and rage with which the pacifists have thrown themselves, alongside the State, against the 'hoodlums', shows what the other side of the 'good man' is really like. There might perhaps be individual reasons for doubting the attempt to reach one's aims with violent means. But when non-violence comes to be raised to the level of a non-violable principle, and where reality is divided into 'good' and 'bad', then arguments cease to have any value, and everything is seen in terms of submission and obedience. The officials of the peace movement, by distancing themselves and denouncing others have clarified one point in particular: that they see their principles—to which they feel duty-bound—as a claim to power over the movement as a whole.

This is obviously not moral behaviour, but political calculation aiming at an internal 'historic compromise'. A compromise to be understood 'in the primary interest of the survival of the species'. (Rudolf Bahro). And the apex of the peace movement heralds and guarantees this operation, reaching pacts at the top, smothering rebelliousness at the bottom. They imagine the rejection of missiles can be bartered for the promise of social peace.

Robert Jungk has said that whoever says 'no more war' must add, 'no more civil war'. He thus upturns the historic alternatives of socialism and barbarism, civil war and genocide. So imperialist wars are not prevented. One participates in building one of their central premisses: internal social peace.

Instead of confronting reactionary transformation with a radical counter-culture, the peace movement is navigating in the wake of this transformation. Once the 'green philosophers' abandon the proletariat to fish in the turbid waters of the reservoirs of conservatism, they must also renounce their past in the left and abandon any claims to emancipation. Women for peace are denying the fundamental concepts of the feminist movement, putting the struggle against oppression, sexism and structural violence into second place behind the great common goal. Some parts of the feminist movement are going back to typically feminine behavioural norms, claiming that it is in the 'nature' of women to devote oneself to sacrifice, submission, the negation of the clash and struggle: all maxims of the peace movement. In this way 'femininity', something long conceived of and fought for what it is: a product of domination, is reaffirmed.

### Open questions and non-remedies

Only an autonomous counter-movement freed from the restrictions and levels of the peace movement, and asserting the interdependence of crises and war, can possibly polarise the pact and create a counterweight to the peace movement's transformation into a kind of new 'nationalism of liberation'.

Decisive methods against rearmament are still those of creating internal disorder and breaking up the foundations of power at points where it is still possible to resist even with limited strength. Until a mass movement develops linking the question of power to a strategy of resistance against imperialist ones of annihilation, we have no choice. Our political involvement must continue to follow the course of strengthening and radicalising the left. We must not limit ourselves to a so-called 'principal danger' or to single aspects of social reality, but must attack the system in its totality. We must trace the lines reconnecting crisis and war; social impoverishment in the inner cities and poverty and annihila-





tion in the 'third world'; sexism and racism; technological attack from above and ecological devastation.

Our own ideas are not clear as to the force of the conclusions to be drawn from this brief analysis. We do not want to give the impression of knowing the answers to problems about which we ourselves are not too clear.

The new social movements—and this is amply demonstrated by the peace movement—are always compound and act in interclassist terms. They place themselves above social content, and in part veer towards the right. They become dubious as a point of reference for revolutionary praxis.

The new subjects of revolutionary change are certainly the sub-classes. But this has only been affirmed at the level of analysis, and very little at the level of social praxis. These sub-classes are struggling and developing forms of resistance, sudden tumults and riots of brief duration which, even though very violent, differ in practice from the new social movements. Insurrections such as those of Brixton and Toxteth have nothing at all to do with traditional political campaigns. A left which makes reference to the sub-classes must review the question of organisation and the areas covered by its own forms of resistance if it wants to find ways of communicating with the 'base'.

The problem of the conditions required to build new forms of awareness and organisation presents itself in the face of the abolition of 'free' salaried work, and forms of labour that have moved away from class centralisation and become disintegrated and atomised. The problem of the conditions required to build new forms of awareness and organisation presents itself. To say that it will be women, immigrants, precarious

workers and those threatened with insecurity who will be the protagonists of future struggles, says absolutely nothing about how subjectivity will be created when the upturning of life in the inner cities is hastened, nor about the role of the radical praxis of the left in the process of forming a class consciousness.

The third world as a whole, resistance here (in West Germany), can no longer be considered as points of departure for revolutionary change, even in the centres of capitalism. Oppressed peoples and countries can do nothing other than go through processes of partial liberation from colonial dependence. The consolidation of this process is strictly linked to the conditions of struggle 'at the heart of the beast' and the destruction of the strongholds of capital.

The significance of the new 'strategic sectors', both sources of accumulation of wealth and instruments of dominion, must be shown practically. The problem arises as to whether these sectors will become the central targets of a revolutionary strategy of attack in the cities, and whether sabotage will be the main form of struggle organised and carried out by the radical left.

The transformation of 'democracies' through economic/political upheaval will eventually reduce the left's area of legal action. This will mean a thrust towards a more radicalised form of resistance. The new social movements do not represent any protection for comrades, and do not in fact create any guaranteed space for action, as the peace movement has clearly demonstrated. A radical left which sees its heritage as that of being able to create resistance at any time, must build structures of its own that are subversive and illegal, if they want to remain undefeated and unpredictable.



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